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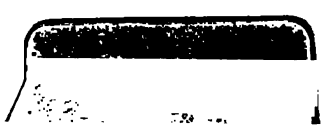

SIMPLE TALES:

BY

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SIMPLE TALES.

THE UNCLE AND NEPHEW.

At the early age of two-and-twenty, Charles Clemont, by the death of his father, became possessed of an estate of 2000*l.* per annum. Unfortunately, his father's habits had been so parsimonious, and his ideas on the subject of expenditure so narrow, that his son had never been allowed by him an income adequate to the common wants of a gentleman. Therefore, when he saw himself possessor of a large estate, and a considerable sum of ready money besides, the sudden change from poverty to wealth had the pernicious effect of making him deem his riches so great as to be inex-

haustible; and his heart and his hand became as open, as his predecessor's had been the contrary.

Generosity and fine feeling marked indeed all his actions: but he wanted judgment; he wanted reflection. Each quick and benevolent impulse he eagerly obeyed, nor waited to consider how far the meditated action was, or was not, pregnant with future good or evil.

But of some of his benevolent impulses he had no reason to repent. The impulse which led him to introduce himself to an oppressed orphan, the daughter of a clergyman, in order that he might offer her his purse and interest, to enable her to defend an unjust suit instituted against her by a man whose addresses she had rejected, was the means of making him the husband of one of the best of women. For the orphan, whom he first visited from pity, he revisited from love; and when she modestly reminded him of the diffe-

rence of their fortunes, and that his friends and family would disapprove so disproportionate an union, he wisely observed, that he considered money not as happiness, but as the *means* of happiness; that he had money, she had none; but then she had beauty, sense, and virtue—qualities, the possession of which was, exhibited as they appeared in her person, essential to his felicity. These great possessions she had a right to withhold; but if she was inclined to waive the exercise of her right in his favour, the obligation in the eye of common sense would be all on his side; and if his family and friends thought otherwise, he could only say that he was independent of them, and should be the more eager to form nearer and dearer ties.

The man who talked thus was young, handsome, eloquent, and impassioned. The woman who listened was equally young, still handsomer, and had as much

secret tenderness in her heart as he had avowed passion in his. Nor did her reserve and her scruples hold out long against the pleadings of Clermont's affection and her own; but after a few weeks of courtship they were united; and the grateful Augusta, having in the course of their acquaintance discovered that Clermont had every virtue but those necessary ones of prudence and œconomy, wisely resolved, that as she did not bring him a fortune, she would, were it necessary, endeavour to save one; and that she would try to make amends by her care, for his pernicious want of management.

In the mean while Clermont's marriage had, though he kept it a secret from Augusta, done an irreparable injury to some of his expectations in life.

The brother of his mother, a gentleman of the name of Morley, went to India at an early age in order to make a fortune; and he succeeded so well, that he was

able very soon to send considerable remittances over to his less prosperous relations in England; and amongst these, though she was married to a man of landed property, he considered Mrs. Clermont, for he well knew the parsimonious disposition of her husband; and all the little indulgences which Charles Clermont could boast of in his childhood, and early youth, were the result of his uncle's bounty to his mother. But on the death of Mrs. Clermont, an event which had a fatal effect for some time on the health and spirits of her affectionate son, the bounty of Mr. Morley was continued to Charles: and if ever he was observed to be dressed like a gentleman, or to make a present to some indigent neighbour equal to the generosity of his heart, it was immediately after a remittance from India; and Clermont had recently received, and expended, a gift from his uncle, when his father died, and he saw himself the uncontrolled master of

what appeared to him an immense fortune. Soon after, he received by overland dispatches the joyful news that his uncle was about to sail for England; but the latter part of the letter contained information which completely counterbalanced the pleasure which the first part of it had given him.

Mr. Morley informed Clermont that he had long intended he should marry his ward, a beautiful and rich heiress, who boarded with a relation near London; and who, having seen him at a watering-place, had written to her guardian, that she was willing to comply with his wishes, and receive the addresses of his nephew. "Therefore," continued Mr. Morley, "you and you only can prevent this union, on which my heart is set, from taking place: but beware how you disappoint me!—obey me, and I will give you 20,000*l.* on the day of marriage; disobey me, and I renounce you for ever!"

Clermont was already well acquainted with his uncle's positiveness and love of arbitrary power; therefore the tyrannical conditions on which he offered him his favour and 30,000*l.* did not surprise, though it painfully affected him. He had seen the lady intended for his wife, and he had conversed with her; for she had introduced herself to him as his uncle's ward, and had obligingly hoped that they should be better acquainted. But though she was beautiful, there was a forwardness in her manner, and a degree of self-conceit in her whole deportment, which made it impossible for her to make as pleasing an impression on Clermont's heart as he had made on hers. Besides, he had already seen Augusta, and his heart had formed a sort of involuntary vow never to allow him to marry another woman. Therefore, had not Clermont's love of the freedom of choice struggled considerably against his desire to oblige his peremptory uncle, he

would have rejected instantly the offer of miss Blagrave's hand, from the resistless influence of a prior attachment; an attachment too on the eve of being crowned by marriage.

The arrival of Mr. Morley was at length announced in the papers, a few days after Clermont was married to Augusta; and the latter instantly wrote a letter to his uncle, welcoming him in the warmest manner to England, and begging leave to set off for Portsmouth directly in order to accompany him to his house; but lamenting at the same time his inability to comply with his wishes, and marry his lovely ward, as he was already married to one of the most amiable of women.

Mr. Morley was an old bachelor, and was so accustomed to have his own way that this unexpected disappointment to his dearest hopes was as new to him as it was unwelcome; and in the first transports of his rage, on receiving Clermont's letter,

he struck his name out of his will; and not contented with writing immediately to Clermont, to let him know that never while he lived would he see or speak to him, he desired that no one in future would dare to mention his nephew in his presence.

Clermont's affectionate heart was sensibly affected by his uncle's positive renunciation of him; for his mother had taught him to love Mr. Morley, and his repeated kindnesses had endeared him to him still more. But when he reflected that this tyrannical relation had expected to be paid for his presents by the surrender of the freedom of his nephew's will, and by a blind compliance with his imperious commands, he reconciled himself to the necessity of not being personally acquainted with a man whose notions were so repugnant to that independence of spirit which he loved; and endeavouring to forget that this unjust man was the darling

brother of his ever-regretted mother, he wiped a tear from his eye as he re-perused his uncle's cruel letter from Portsmouth, then hastened to the society of his Augusta—that Augusta, at once the cause, the excuse, and the consolation of his disobedience.

About this time, to Augusta's vexation as well as surprise, Clermont presented her with a case of very fine jewels; nor were his equipages and the other bridal preparations at all inferior to what they would have been had he married an heiress.

"My dear Charles, you seem to forget that I bring you no fortune," cried Augusta.

"On the contrary—I have proved that I remember it."

"Not by expending so much on bridal splendour."

"On the contrary—by that means I intend to prove to the world that I think

you, rich only as you are in virtues and attractions, as worthy of shining in all the state which wealth can give, as if you were the heiress of thousands."

"Kind, but not considerate, Clermont! for will not the world be more inclined to impute our parade to my extravagance than to your delicate and jealous affection? Will they not be apt," continued she, smiling, "to talk very unpolitely about a beggar on horseback, and riding to the devil?"

"Psha!" replied Clermont warmly; "let them if they dare."

"Well, but, dear Charles, when the first six months of our marriage are over, surely one of the carriages at least may be laid down?"

"What! would you have me lead people to imagine that you had lost some of your value in my eyes?"

"Yes—provided you give *me* no reason to fear that I have lost any such value.

Fear of what the world may think will never, I trust, deter us from acting prudently: indeed, my dear Charles, I hope that neither you nor I shall be in the habit of exclaiming, like the woman in the comedy, '*But what will Mrs. Grundy say?*'—No, no, we will have no Mrs. Grundys; or, rather, you shall be my Mrs. Grundy, and I yours."

But to return to Mr. Morley.—Though he had so hastily and peremptorily renounced his nephew, he found very shortly after that there was a void left in his heart, which his nephew only could fill. He had warm affections, and they wanted an object:—this object had long been the only child of his only sister; he therefore brought with him to England a heart prepared to love Clermont: and to be forced to give up these long-cherished hopes was consequently most agonizing to him. But why should he give him up? Was his fault so very great?—Was he not his own

master; and was he not already married when his letter arrived? Thus he reasoned with himself; and he resolved, if he found that Charles had married an amiable woman, and before he knew his pleasure, that he would retract his hasty renunciation of him, and consider him as his nephew and heir.

But unfortunately for Clermont, Mr. Morley, in order to make inquiries concerning him and his wife, took up his abode at the house of some relations of his and his nephew's, who were interested in keeping up the old gentleman's resentment against him; some, too, who thought that their daughters were quite as handsome as Augusta, and might have been deemed worthy of being their cousin Charles's choice, though *he* had presumed to think differently: therefore, instead of hearing any thing likely to appease his anger against his nephew, he heard every thing that could increase it. He found that

Clermont had made an inconsiderate love-match, and certainly *since* the receipt of Mr. Morley's letter; that his wife, though she had not a farthing for her marriage portion, was spending thousands already;—for, as Augusta had predicted, all the bridal expenses and parade were imputed to her extravagance;—and his mortified ward was not backward to irritate his anger to the utmost: till the exasperated old man, like Sir Anthony Absolute in The Rivals, was ready to declare, after joining a tremendous oath to the name of Charles, that he would not breathe the same atmosphere with him, but would get him an atmosphere of his own.

Clermont was soon informed of the increased anger of his uncle; but he continued to take the greatest precautions lest Augusta should hear of it too. However, all his precautions were vain. One of his female relations, a common-place, envious, coarse-minded woman, and a

great tale-bearer into the bargain, came unexpectedly to dine with Augusta while her husband was out. This lady, to whom Clermont's generous table and carriage were conveniences which she did not like to part with, made a great merit of not having dropped his acquaintance on his contracting a marriage which all his family so highly disapproved. This woman, amongst her other perfections, had the common and mischievous habit of telling those for whom she professed a friendship, all the severe observations which were made upon them; in order, as it should seem, that she might boast of the noble defence of them into which she had generously entered—her real malignity hiding itself thus in the garb of benevolence: for the pain inflicted by knowing that one has been attacked, entirely swallows up the faint pleasure of learning one has been defended; and such professing friends I have long learnt to consider as

secret enemies. Nor was Augusta slow to form the same opinion of Mrs. Catherine Clermont, when, after flattering her for some time on her sweetness of temper and the benevolence of her manner, she added with a sigh, "Well, now—who should have thought that such an amiable creature as you are should have enemies! —Yet enemies you have, my dear, though I shudder to say it."

"No doubt I have, madam," coldly replied Augusta, "at least I hope so; for, if I had not, it would be a sign that I have not merit enough to have friends."

"True, my dear cousin, true; but to think that these mercenary wretches, my cousin Truemans, should set my cousin Morley so much against you, and prevent him from forgiving his nephew for having married you!"

"Who is Mr. Morley, ma'am; and what relation is he to my husband?" replied Augusta.

"Bless me! don't you know he is Charles's own uncle?"

"No—I never heard Mr. Clermont mention him in my life."

Immediately the astonished Mrs. Catherine made vain all Clermont's kind precautions; and the gratified though grieved Augusta was informed of the sacrifice which Clermont had made for her sake, and understood the generous motives which had led him to conceal it; while, too much affected to speak, she allowed Mrs. Catherine to go on uninterruptedly in her relation of the cruel things said by the relations against her, and the spirited manner in which she had defended her.

"Then she is so extravagant!" say they; "jewels and carriages indeed for a girl that had hardly a shift to her back—a poor parson's daughter!"

"Well, and suppose she was nothing

else," says I, "what then? She is a 'squire's lady now, and our relation."

"Then she is so proud!" says one.

"So she ought to be," says I; "she has beauty and accomplishments,"

"Oh, as to her beauty, she is painted up to the eyes," says another.

"It is all natural colour," says I; "for I have seen her rub her cheek, and it did not come off."

She might have gone on an hour in this detestable manner, venting her spite under the mask of friendship, without provoking a reply from Augusta, as Augusta was too oppressed to speak; for besides the pain that she felt at hearing how unkindly she was spoken of by Clermont's relations, and the indignation which Mrs. Catherine's indelicate communications excited in her, she grieved to think how much Clermont's attachment to her had cost him; and in the tender

humility of her heart, she feared that she should never be able to repay him. Still the dear conviction how truly, how exclusively she was beloved, conquered at length every painful emotion; and while she was thinking over what she would say to her husband, he appeared, and she could say nothing; but throwing herself into his arms, she only welcomed him with tears.

"What is the matter?—for God's sake, what has happened? Cousin Catherine, speak!" cried Clermont, almost breathless with alarm. But before the surprised and almost conscience-stricken Mrs. Catherine could answer, Augusta had smiled through her tears, as she raised her fine eyes to Clermont's, and had articulated with effort, "I cry from mixed feelings, dear Charles, but that of happiness predominates;" while Clermont, relieved of his fears, seated himself beside her on the sofa, awaiting an explanation of this

scene; and Mrs. Catherine, afraid of his reproaches for having told Augusta what he meant should be concealed from her, was glad to hear Clermont say that his carriage would not be put up till it had conveyed her home: she then took a hasty leave, and the husband and wife were left alone.

Augusta then found words: but with the expressions of an affectionate and grateful heart she mixed the most earnest entreaties that Clermont would do all in his power to bring about a reconciliation with his uncle; "for I know," continued she, "that his anger distresses you; I have occasionally seen you depressed, and now I am sure I have found out the cause."

Clermont owned that she was right; that he had longed for his uncle's arrival, though he had never seen him; and that he deeply regretted having forfeited his favour: but still, he did nor like, he said, to importune him to forgive him, lest he

should think he did it more from avarice than affection.

"If he be disposed to forgive you, he will not think so: write affectionately, and he will be glad to believe you sincere; for every one likes to fancy himself the object of affection: those indeed who wish to keep you disunited may impute to you motives of which they are conscious themselves; but your uncle himself will, at first at least, be preserved by self-love from imputing them to you;—write, therefore, throw yourself on your feelings, and hope every thing from the result."

Clermont promised that he would write; and then suddenly exclaimed, "But what could possibly induce my cousin Catherine to make you unhappy by telling you the particulars which you have related? I am so angry with her that I could almost find in my heart to forbid her the house!"

Augusta at first made no reply to this

speech, for she felt the danger to her peace which must accrue from the acquaintance of such a woman as Mrs. Catherine Clermont: she knew that though she wished to live in charity with all mankind, it was impossible that she should do so while this mischievous retailer of others' malice had constant access to her, and could call her angry feelings continually into action; and out of justice and mercy to herself, she was on the point of saying, "Yes—do forbid her the house, for she is a dangerous acquaintance," when she recollected that this pernicious woman was a poor, old, and insulated being; and that an occasional dinner at their table, and a ride in their carriage, were the one a necessary, the other a luxury to her; and to deprive such a being of two of her scanty pleasures was an idea so repugnant to Augusta's benevolence, that, conquering the just fear and indignation which Mrs. Catherine had excited in her

bosom, she desired Clermont to recollect, that though Mrs. Catherine had given her pain by her communications, and might do so again, yet it was but a grain of uneasiness which she had endured, or might through his means endure again; counteracted by a store of comforts and enjoyments; whereas their indigent relation had no *pleasures* and few *comforts* to set against the pain of being forbidden their house, and its indulgencies; and therefore she conjured him to forget and forgive her fault, as she herself should do.

"Spoken and felt like yourself!" cried Clermont; "be it so, Augusta; and let it still be your pride, that you have pleasure in returning good for evil."

When Clermont had written his letter, he showed it to Augusta, and she thought it calculated to soften the heart of his uncle; but, unfortunately, it was received by Mr. Morley soon after he had heard an exaggerated account of the poverty of Augusta and her connections, and of the

pernicious expenses in which she was involving his nephew.

A man who has toiled through the best part of his existence under the burning sun of India in order to obtain wealth, may be allowed to look on wealth as the grand ultimatum in marriage,—and so thought Mr. Morley:—therefore, even more irritated against Clermont than when he wrote last, he replied to his affectionate letter in terms the most insulting to him, both as a man and a husband.

"Now I am sorry you wrote to him," said Augusta, after a long indignant silence occasioned by reading the letter,—"but the fault was mine."

"The *injury* is yours," cried Clermont: "had it been done to me only, I should not have regarded it—but to dare to speak ill of you! However, we are quite sufficient to each other's happiness, so why should we mind the folly and wickedness of others?"

"Why, indeed!" replied Augusta: "So burn the letter, and let us endeavour to forget that your uncle exists."

The letter was burnt, and all mention of Mr. Morley's name prohibited; but Clermont saw a few months after, in the newspaper, that on such a day was married at St. George's, Hanover Square, Richard Morley, esq., to lady Susan Delmor, youngest daughter to lord S——. And on the same day was married miss Blagrave, ward of Mr. Morley, to lord Delmor, the brother of lady Susan."

"Augusta! my uncle is married!" cried Clermont, giving her the paper:—"May he be happy! that's all; but I doubt it, considering his age and lady Susan's character:" and Mr. Morley's name was again forgotten.

When they had been married a twelvemonth, Augusta gave birth to twins, a son and a daughter, and the happy Clermont made the whole village intoxicated

on the occasion. An ox was roasted at the christening, and the children's christening mantles were the most superb that money could procure. In vain did Augusta remonstrate against such unnecessary finery.

"You know, my love," said he, "these things once bought are bought for life: if you present me with such welcome presents again and again, the same mantles will serve, you know."

"If I make you many such presents, Charles," replied Augusta gravely, "and you continue your accustomed thoughtless generosity, my children may wear the mantles indeed, but the point lace will, I fear, have been, through necessity, disposed of."

Clermont stared with almost angry surprise; for he still imagined that a man of 2000*l.* a-year, and a large sum in money, could not spend his income; though, had he examined his accounts, he would have

found that his ready money was pretty nearly exhausted.

"My dearest girl," replied he, "your confinement has weakened you, and made you liable to gloomy thoughts.—Believe me, I have not been guilty of expenses which I can ill afford: and as to the mantles and other things, 'tis but—"

"O Charles!" interrupted Augusta, "I have heard of a woman who ruined her husband by '*'Tis buts*;' and I sincerely hope no one will ever hear of a husband who ruined his wife and family by the same thing!"

Clermont looked grave for a moment; but, recovering his usual spirits, he went down stairs to some friends to whom he had promised their fill of claret and champagne, but who never treated themselves with any thing but port and madeira;—no, not even on the birth of an heir.

"But my wife has given me twins," thought Clermont, "therefore my treat

on the occasion ought to be doubly splendid."

Three years after, the birth of a third child occasioned fresh rejoicings and expenses; and Clermont being in the constant habit of bringing home company to dinner, Augusta began to fear, such was the enormous expense at which they lived, that her forebodings would soon be realised; especially when, on hearing that the city near which he lived was at the next general election to be represented by two *thick-and-thin men*, that is, men who go all lengths with the minister, whoever he may be, Clermont thought it his duty to oppose them, and to offer himself, in want of a better candidate, to receive the independent votes.

"But, my dear Clermont, consider the expense of a contested election!"

"I cannot, Augusta, and *ought* not to consider my own petty interests when those of my country are at stake."

"Are the interests of your wife and children petty interests, Clermont?—However, I respect your motives, and will say no more."

In two years more the parliament was dissolved. Clermont was declared a candidate for ——, and his canvass was a promising one; but he was mortified to find that in proportion as his hopes increased his wife's spirits fell; and when he reproached her with this perverseness, she replied, faintly smiling, "My dear Charles, I shall find it an awful thing to make great dinners in London for cabinet ministers, or opposition leaders."

"What do you mean?" asked Clermont.

"If you gain your election, we must have a house in London."

"Well—and what then?"

"Why then you will never be happy unless you invite your brother-members frequently to dinner; and then, out of

affection you will invite the members of one party one day, and out of candour those of the other another day: then, I suppose, I must give a ball to their wives every year;—and what with the expenses of getting into parliament, and expenses when in it—"

"Well—and what then?"

"Why then, adieu to domestic comfort and younger children's fortunes!"

"You see things, Augusta, in too serious a light," replied Clermont, vexed but not convinced, and hastening to a meeting of his friends.

The day of election arrived:—Augusta with her little boy and her two little girls appeared on the scene of action; and a most painful day indeed it was to her.—It grieved her to wish against her husband's wishes;—it wounded her tenderness to desire him to feel the pangs of disappointment and mortification:—still, aware of the expenses and temptations to

extravagances to which success would expose her husband, she shuddered at every shout of triumph, and felt herself turn pale when informed that Clermont was two hundred a-head.

At four o'clock on the election day, Clermont followed a large party of his friends who came to congratulate Augusta on the certainty of her husband's being returned. Augusta endeavoured to smile, but could not, and she burst into tears; while the gentlemen attributed her emotion to joyful surprise: but a meaning glance, which Augusta gave Clermont, convinced him that her tears were not those of joy, and he looked excessively foolish when his companions obligingly congratulated him on the satisfaction which his victory would give to Mrs. Clermont.

How little did they know Augusta's heart!—She looked at her daughters, and she sighed to think how fatally the ex-

pected success might operate on their future well-being; but at the same time she secretly and solemnly resolved, that from that moment, though as yet the children of opulence, they should be taught the privations which they might one day be forced to learn as the children of comparative poverty.

At six o' clock the fortune of the day changed: the adverse party became the highest on the poll, and at night the books were closed, and Mr. Clermont's opponent declared the sitting member.

Augusta on hearing the news again burst into tears, and these tears were really tears of joy; but when she saw the pale cheek and disappointed look of her husband, she felt a pang of something like remorse for the satisfaction which she had experienced, and, forgetting every thing but his mortification, tried every art of inventive love to beguile him of his cares.

"Hypocrite!" cried Clermont kindly but

reproachfully, "I know in your heart you rejoice that I have failed."

"I have two hearts," replied Augusta blushing, "one a conjugal, the other a maternal heart:—in the former I grieve acutely for your failure, in the other I rejoice at it; for, O dear Charles! what anxiety to come does it not spare me!"

Clermont's next step was to call in all his election bills; but to his great surprise and distress he found it was not so easy a matter to discharge them: they amounted to some thousands; and on requiring from his bankers the remainder of the ready money left him by his father, they made it appear quite clearly by their books that he had drawn it all out long ago.

"My dear Clermont" cried his wife affectionately, "let this painful surprise be the means of consoling you for the loss of your election: had you gained it, you would have had to pay this sum just the same, and to have incurred still greater

expenses in perpetuity: the money is well bestowed if it has purchased for you experience, and motives for being contented with your present situation."

Still when Clermont, having been forced to mortgage an estate, paid the money which he had raised into the hands of his agent, Augusta could not help exclaiming with a sigh, "What a pretty fortune that would have been for my poor girls!"

As soon as the money was paid Clermont thought no more of it, but continued to live in his accustomed style; to keep hounds, to give dinners, and with only 2000*l.* a-year to live at the rate of 5000*l.*

Augusta, meanwhile, having in vain endeavoured to make him look into his affairs, was endeavouring by her scrupulous œconomy and self-denial to balance her husband's extravagance. In her dress she was even parsimonious, though Clermont was continually presenting her with the most expensive apparel, laces and ornaments,

for she was the greatest pride of his heart still, and he was as vain of her beauty as ever he had been; therefore he loved to see her well-dressed, and it was with difficulty she could contrive to hide by tasteful and inventive œconomy, and by varying the shape of her dresses, that the gowns themselves were old, very old. Clermont was continually discovering it, and wondering why she did not wear the fine muslins, laces, and cambrics, which he gave her. Augusta only smiled, and Clermont was suffered to wonder still.

Her little boy was now eight years old, and Augusta, glad to save the expense of schooling as long as possible, recovering with ease the rudiments of the Latin tongue which her father had taught her, instructed him entirely herself; while she instructed the girls in every branch of household œconomy and needle-work, and tried to prepare them to be independent and respectable on a narrow income. Augusta had observed

with pain and compassion the fate of country-gentlemen's daughters in England, who happen to remain unmarried. After being accustomed to live in a certain style, to have servants to wait on them, and to travel with perhaps a set of horses; on their parents' death the estate goes to the elder brother, and they, having received their scanty portion, are forced to learn to live on a narrow income, and spend the rest of their lives in endeavouring to unlearn the proud ideas and habits of their youth, and to look back with vain regrets to the joys of that home which for them exists no more.

"No,—this shall never be the case with my daughters," thought Augusta; "my children shall not be habituated to indulgences which one day or other they must relinquish; I am disappointed of my hopes of saving fortunes for them out of our income, but their education shall prepare them to be poor with cheerfulness and

dignity: besides, I shall be but too happy if at last Clermont discovers the sacrifices and privations to which his extravagance dooms us, and should, struck with compunction, be induced to alter his way of living; and in the mean while if he does not look into his affairs I must."

One day Clermont had left home very early in the morning, and was not certain that he should return that night: he however altered his plans, and meeting by accident a gentleman at an inn, with whose society he was much pleased, he invited him home to dine with him, and take a bed at his house.

They chanced to alight at the back gate, and unheard and unexpected Clermont and his new friend entered the breakfast-room where Augusta sat at dinner with her children.—But what a dinner! cold meat, potatoes, and pudding! while Augusta and her daughters were dressed in dark

linen gowns, evidently bought for no other purpose than to save washing.

Clermont started back with surprise and consternation; but Augusta, not at all abashed though a stranger witnessed this instance of temperance and frugality in the family of a man of landed property, rose with dignity and welcomed the gentleman introduced by her husband.

"And pray, Mrs. Clermont," said Clermont in a tone of pique and mortification, "is this the only dinner you have to give us?"

"Pardon me," replied Augusta, "this is our mode of living,—yours is quite another thing; and if Mr. Medway will be contented to wait an hour or two, you shall have a dinner certainly."

So saying she left the room, leaving Clermont surprised and displeased.

"My dear sir," said he, "that woman has only one fault in the world, and that is

that she is teasingly and unnecessarily œconomical: she has a fine wardrobe, yet she wears that dowdy gown, and with a farm and estate stocked with all the good things of life she almost starves herself and the children;—I protest, if I did not still love her to distraction, I am so angry that I could leave my house directly, and not see her again for a month."

"Indeed, papa," cried the younger child, "I am always glad when you dine at home, for then we get some nice things."

Mr. Medway owned that the charge of over œconomy which Clermont brought against his wife was a very uncommon one, and he could not help pitying him for being united to such a mean-spirited woman.

That evening and that night Clermont, for the first time, treated Augusta with sullen disregard: she had mortified his pride, and he resolved that he would wound her feelings. Augusta, however,

took no notice of his unusual coldness, though she felt it sensibly; but when they met at breakfast, she looked as serene as usual. When dinner-time approached, Clermont, who had been showing Mr. Medway his grounds, seeing, as he thought, the housekeeper in her pantry, put his head in at the window, and calling "Evans!" desired her to give Mr. Medway one of her excellent jellies. In a few minutes some jellies were handed out of the window; and Clermont, looking up to thank Evans, beheld (a checked apron tied round her waist, and her hands still covered with the pastry which she had been making) Augusta herself!

"What does this mean? Why is this?" faltered out Clermont:—"Is Evans ill?"

"Evans has been gone some time, my love:—I heard of a better place for her than ours, and rather than she should

lose it, I parted with her at a week's notice."

"And when does a servant in her place come home?"

"Never," replied Augusta resolutely, but mildly;—"I am my own housekeeper now, and I feel the use of it already.—Nay, dear Clermont, do not look so grave. Will your jellies and your pastry be less grateful to your palate because they are made by the hands of your wife and children?".

Clermont was confounded:—he did not answer, but walked away by himself, and Mr. Medway retired to dress. At dinner, Clermont was pensive, and even sad. He began to suspect that such scrupulous œconomy, such attentive management in Augusta, though at the risk of displeasing him, must have a motive; and while Augusta, to whom the sight of his thoughtfulness gave unwonted spirits, talked and laughed with Mr. Medway, who found the charms of her mind at

least equal to the charms of her person, Clermont, absorbed in his own reveries, started with surprise to find that bed-time was arrived. Another night he passed in silence, but not *sullen* silence. Augusta had gained her point; she had alarmed his fears, and he *dreaded* inquiry, yet felt the necessity of it; and he changed colour, when Augusta in a firm but solemn tone requested to see him alone in her dressing-room after breakfast.

Clermont promised compliance, and as soon as the tea-table was removed repaired to the place of rendezvous. But when Augusta saw him, and found that the time of the painful disclosure which she had to make was come, her wonted fortitude forsook her and she burst into tears.

"Augusta! my love! my dearest love! do not grieve on my account; I know it is not for yourself that you feel," cried Clermont; "I guess what you have to tell me, and I now see and understand

the excellent motives of the conduct which surprised and displeased me:—but be assured, that whatever misfortune I have to learn I shall bear it with cheerfulness: I owe it to you, not to add to the weakness which caused my embarrassments, the weakness to deplore them."

Augusta threw herself into her husband's arms; and, as fast as her tears would let her, exclaimed, "A little courage and self-denial, Charles, and all will be well again."

She then proceeded to inform him, that having ventured, in his name, to call in all his bills, and having examined his steward's accounts, she had found that he owed several thousand pounds; some of which had been owing some time, and that there was no money in hand any where to discharge them.

"Several thousand pounds!—Impossible!"

"O! it is too true indeed;—near 20,000*l.*!"

"And you—have you no debts, Augusta? Are there no house-keeping accounts?"

"Very trifling ones."

"Why, how have you contrived to go on without running in debt, if, as you say, you have seldom had assistance from the steward?"

"I have disposed of all the jewels which I thought I had a right to dispose of: and when you recollect that one of my earliest and dearest friends is a milliner and wholesale dealer at ——, you will see that I had the means of selling at a fair price the unmade presents which you have for years been lavishing upon me: you would be surprised if you knew to what a large sum these things amounted; and I hope you will now forgive me for resisting your entreaties that I should make them up and wear them."

"Yet I have reproached you with parsimony!" he exclaimed.

"O my love! but for my frugality

we could not have gone on so long. Believe me, had I myself suspected the extent of our involvements, I should have requested this interview sooner, but I was unwilling to disturb your happiness; and that I and my children might be prepared for any change of situation, I taught them habits of faring humbly, that they might never feel pain from contrast."

"Augusta!" cried Clermont, fondly folding her to his heart, "do you remember that you refused to marry me because you were not rich? I told you then I should make a good bargain in marrying you—and I was right; for, had I been married to any other woman, ruin, inevitable ruin, would probably have overwhelmed me."

"I am glad, I am very glad," replied Augusta, "to have been able to reward your disinterested love, and show my gratitude to you for—"

"Have I not often told you," returned

Clermont, " that my love was *not* disinterested—that I married you because I could not be happy without you? Therefore, what gratitude do you owe me?"

" My dear Charles, remember that a well-disposed mind loves to enhance the obligations it receives:—I love to think myself obliged to you, Clermont."

" I wish you would love to do justice to yourself," replied Clermont, " and would own that the obligation is all on my side; but if we go on thus, business will be neglected—tell me, dear, dear Augusta, what can I do to extricate myself?"

" The means, happily, are in your power; but I know that to use them will be a dreadful pang to you indeed."

" Name them. My blind folly deserves punishment."

" In the first place, you must sell this estate and live at the cottage; in the next place, the wood across the meadow, your

favourite wood, contains excellent timber, and in sufficient quantities to pay off, when cut down, some thousands of the debt."

"That wood!—my mother's wood!—that wood!—must that be destroyed!"

He said no more, but sinking into his chair he covered his face with his hands.

"No, Augusta; no," he exclaimed at length, "I cannot consent to it—any thing but that. That wood, many of whose oaks were planted by my grandfather:—that wood, so dear to my ever-regretted mother, and where the happiest hours of my youth and childhood were past.—Nay, Augusta," added he, "it was in that wood that I prevailed on you to own that you loved me; and there I also overcame your scruples, and made you promise to be mine: No, I cannot—I cannot *indeed* let it be cut down. What would my ancestors say, could they look from their graves and see me allow

of such an action?—They would feel themselves dishonoured."

"But if cutting down the wood be the only means by which you can discharge just debts—would they not feel themselves more dishonoured by the wood's remaining uncut and the debts unpaid?"

"True—too true," replied Clermont; "and I see I have no hope—No, the wood must go."

So saying, he walked out of the room, and Augusta saw him go into the wood, nor did she see him again till dinner-time; but she heard from the steward that Clermont had already had courage to mark the trees that were intended for removal.

Mr. Medway soon observed that Clermont was greatly distressed, and Augusta saw that he did; therefore she thought it rather indelicate and obtrusive in him not to offer to take his departure:—indeed, she was far from being prepossessed in his

favour: he seemed to her to be acting a part; to be affecting refinement, though disposed to be vulgar; and every now and then he was on the point of vociferating an oath, which he suddenly and eagerly suppressed: besides, she was not at all pleased with his behaviour to herself. He looked at her with such marked admiration, and seized her hand and pressed it so often in a manner at once passionate and familiar, that she began to form a very disadvantageous opinion of Mr. Medway and his motives for staying.

After dinner, Augusta retired; and as soon as she was gone Medway artfully contrived to lead the open-hearted Clermont to confide to him all his distress.

"Forgive me, sir, but the world and your relations," observed Medway, "have always attributed your expensive style of living, your contested election, and so forth, to your wife's vanity and ambition."

"Then the world and my relations are infamous calumniators," cried Clermont, starting up indignantly, and forgetting his own distress in this injustice to his wife.

"You cannot wonder at your relations being willing to blame Mrs. Clermont, as they thought her by no means a proper for you."

"They were *right* there," replied Clermont with a sarcastic smile:—"To match my paltry acres, she had nothing to offer but beauty, temper, and accomplishments:—To match my want of judgment, and empty thoughtlessness, she had only sound sense, prudence, and reflection:—To match my vicious extravagance and self-indulgence, she had nothing but rigid œconomy and self-denial. True, sir, true, we are mated, but not *matched*;—and yet to this dissimilarity alone do I owe my not being at this moment ruined past redemption. I might have married an *heiress*, my *equal* she was called, or rather

my superior, in fortune; consequently she would have deemed herself justified to be as expensive in her tastes, as lavish in her expenditure as I was; and ruin, inevitable ruin, would have been the consequence; while Augusta, full of gratitude to me for the supposed obligation I had conferred on her by preferring her to a richer, a prouder woman, has laboured by her prudence to counteract my wicked want of it. She—O! sir," he added, his voice choked with tears as he spoke; "wretch that I was, to lament the loss of my trees, or of any thing, while my wife is spared to me!—She is my only true wealth, and she shall find that I have at last learnt to feel her value."

He then related to Medway all Augusta's self-denial and œconomy; and Medway had felt himself moved to tears by the affecting warmth with which Clermont praised his exemplary wife, when Augusta entered the room, and in a fal-

tering voice told Clermont that the person to bargain for the timber was come.

"So soon!" cried Clermont, turning pale; "he is in a great hurry."

"So I thought," replied Augusta,—to whom the wood was nearly as dear as it was to her husband.

Mr. Medway during this time was walking up and down the room: he then drank a glass of wine, wiped his eyes, and, seizing Clermont's hand, exclaimed—

"The wood shall *not* be cut down:—I will advance the money;—you shall give me your bond for it, and pay me by instalments."

"Impossible!" replied Clermont;—"my estates are so tied up, I cannot give you security."

"The best possible security," he replied, pointing to Augusta,—"the integrity, the active virtue of that admirable woman. If she lives, I am sure of being paid;—if she dies, and I were to lose the

money, I should at least have the satisfaction of knowing I had lost it from an honourable wish of doing homage to the merit of a woman who is an honour to her sex."

Clermont was generous enough to rejoice at this tribute to Augusta's merit, though it was, in a manner, at his expense: but Augusta did not enjoy being praised on these terms; nor, though willing to save the wood, did she like to accept so great an obligation from a stranger: besides, she could not help attributing improper motives to Mr. Medway. But Clermont's plans for repaying the money were already formed: one estate was to be sold; but out of what remained he was to lay by so much a-year, and live in retirement.

"And then, Augusta, I shall live chiefly at home, and assist you in educating the children," added he.

"A blessed change that would be! and

it almost tempts me to do what I think wrong," answered Augusta, "and accept Mr. Medway's offer: but from you, sir, a stranger, I do not like to accept so great a favour."

"I have altered my mind again," cried the strange Mr. Medway;—"you shall not sell any estate;—your debt is only 16,000*l.* and I will advance the whole sum. Zounds!" cried he, (suppressing a more violent oath, and seizing Augusta's hand, which he pressed to his lips again and again and again,) "I would do any thing to prove my sense of that woman's excellence!"

Augusta was really *shocked* at the warmth of his expressions; but Clermont saw nothing in them but proofs of Medway's sense of Augusta's merit,—and his manner delighted him. Still, though disposed himself to accept his new friend's generous offer, he dared not, while he saw how reluctant to it Augusta was.

"You do not answer, Mrs. Clermont, my dear dear woman, you don't answer. Will you not let your husband accept my offer?"

"Mr. Clermont must do as he pleases, sir," replied Augusta; "but I must say, that to me any privations, any trials would be preferable to the cruel and indelicate one of owing such vast obligations to a stranger. Till yesterday, sir, we were strangers even to your name and person, and we know nothing more of you to-day. Your offer, liberal as it is,—"

"May be, you think, a mere boast, I suppose," interrupted Mr. Medway;—"but look here, my sweet soul, look here!"

So saying, he took out his pocket-book, and displayed notes and checks to the amount of 20,000*l.*

"I do not doubt your riches, sir," continued Augusta, "I only doubt the propriety of our benefiting by them. I may

be proud, but I must own that I would welcome poverty rather than be bound in such a heavy chain of pecuniary obligation even by a friend;—and you, sir, are a *stranger*.—Pardon me, sir, but I do not know what your motives may be, nor can the world know; disinterested generosity is so rare a thing, that few believe in its existence; and who knows but that Mr. Clermont, if he accepts your bounty, might have to lament the loss of his wife's reputation as well as his fortune! Sir," continued Augusta, blushing, "I dare not say more, and I could not bear to say less; but if, after this, Mr. Clermont can accept your offer, I shall endeavour to submit to the trial with resignation."

"Admirable! admirable! by —." Here Mr. Medway muttered an oath, and danced about the room.

"Say no more, Augusta," cried Clermont, "say no more; ever wise and prudent, you have a right to have your

slightest wish attended to, and I submit myself to your guidance."

"You must alter your determination, sir, I can tell you," exclaimed Mr. Medway, "and accept my offer, or you and I can meet no more. So, madam, because I am a *stranger*, and would willingly save you and your careless husband from ruin, you must be bold enough to suppose that I may have taken a fancy to your pretty face, or that the world may suspect it!—Odds my life, madam! do I look like a gay deceiver?—do I look like a seducer of married women, and a disturber of the peace of families?—Answer me that!"

At this appeal, Clermont, though very angry, was forced to turn away to avoid laughing; for Mr. Medway was nearer sixty than fifty, was short and thick in his person, had a wide flat face, an olive complexion, a nose covered with snuff, and wore a flaxen Brutus wig, which was always a little on one side. Even Au-

gusta could scarcely retain her gravity when called upon to answer this question; but recovering her dignity she answered, with a sarcastic smile but downcast eye, that "she did not allude to his power of doing ill, she only mentioned the possibility of his having the inclination."

"Saucy! monstrous saucy, that!" exclaimed Mr. Medway, strutting across the room and back again:—"still, I must own that my vanity is so flattered at your supposing it possible for me to injure your character, that I forgive your impertinence, and all the reparation I ask for it is a kiss."

Even Clermont was angry at this request; and Augusta proudly repulsed the audacious stranger as he familiarly approached her.

"Very well, very well," cried he;—"You will offer me a kiss some time or other, and then I'll refuse you, that's all."

"He is certainly mad," whispered

Augusta;—and Clermont thought the same.

"Apropos," said Mr. Medway: "Is not one Dick Morley, a swearing, positive, cross old rascal, your uncle?"

"Mr. Morley is my uncle, sir," replied Clermont, reddening with indignation; "but do not suppose that your intended kindness to me can give you a right in my eyes to speak ill of my uncle."

"Zounds! man, he speaks ill enough of you."

"That may be, sir,—but, sir, he is my mother's brother, sir, and was once my friend and benefactor;—and by my mother's dear memory I swear, that let who will call him rascal, they shall retract, or answer for it to me."

"He is an infernal old rascal, for all that," replied Medway.

And Charles, forgetting Augusta was present, was darting forward to strike Mr. Medway, when he saw tears in his eyes,

and heard him falter out, as he stretched forth his hand to him, "'Oons, Charles! have I not a right to call myself names if I please? I am an old rascal, for believing the cursed people who told lies about that pretty, pale rogue there; and suffering myself to be so long separated from a nephew like you!"

"I am so surprised! so overpowered!" cried Charles:—while Augusta, smiling significantly, but pale and trembling from her recent alarm, came up to Mr. Morley to offer the kiss which she had so lately refused.

"I told you so," cried he, embracing her; "but I have not self-denial enough to fulfil my prophecy completely, and refuse the offered favour."

He then, unsolicited, informed them that his wife had eloped from him, leaving him luckily no children, and that his ward, by her extravagance, had ruined her husband;—that these events had

awakened in his heart a tender feeling towards his nephew, when he heard that he was greatly involved, and was on the brink of ruin;—that, happening to see him accidentally, and finding him the picture of his mother, tenderness had completely conquered resentment, and he was determined to step in and save him; but he wished first to form, unknown to both husband and wife, his own opinion of the latter, and find out, if possible, whether she was a devil or an angel;—that Clermont's indiscreet hospitality had put this opportunity in his power; "for who but you," said he, "would have thought of inviting to your house a man whom you knew nothing about! I might have been a swindler, for aught you knew."

"You did not look like one, sir; and the landlord of the inn where I met you assured me you were a gentleman."

"Well, well; I came, and luckily for you and me too: now I trust that we shall not soon part again. But you cannot ima-

gine the constraint I have been putting on myself in order that I might behave prettily before your elegant wife. I knew I must not swear and hector before her; no—I would as soon have ventured to approach a clean white petticoat in dirty boots; and I vow and protest I have sometimes been nearly choked with the effort of swallowing down an oath: but, my dear, now you know I am your uncle, will you not allow me to swear a little now and then?"

"No," said Augusta smiling; "now I know you to be my uncle, I am the more interested that you should appear to advantage: therefore I cannot give my sanction to your continuance of a custom which may make a pious and well-born man appear low-bred and impious."

"So!—a pretty free-spoken young lady this; but by George—I like you the better! and I feel already so much your slave, that I believe I am capable of sacrificing even my habits to you. But where

are the children?—my children! I thought once or twice I should have betrayed myself before the time by blubbering over them." Clermont ran to fetch the children and introduce them to their uncle, who received them with the tenderest welcome: then, looking first on the eldest girl and then on the younger, he exclaimed, wiping his eyes and folding the former to his bosom,——

"This girl is the image of your mother, Charles, and I shall be too fond of her; but this—why this is the image of your wife, and I declare I know not but I shall on that account love her as well as her sister."

Clermont's eyes glistened at this compliment to Augusta, and to the bottom of his soul he enjoyed his own and her triumph over his uncle's prejudices and the malice of his relations.

"This is one of the happiest moments in my life, sir," said he, pressing his uncle's

hand in his; while Augusta, no less affected, wept with pleasure over the dear girls thus unexpectedly raised from threatening obscurity into increased affluence: but recovering herself a little, she apologized to Mr. Morley for not having, owing to her ignorance of who he was, treated him with that attentive respect due to her husband's uncle.

"My dear niece," replied Mr. Morley, (for he seemed to like to call her by that title,) "you are one of those happy beings who can never want to apologize to any one; for you have that exquisite sense of propriety that must ever make you pay to all exactly the due portion of attention and respect: had you known me to be your uncle, no doubt you would have given me a warmer welcome; but you were a gentlewoman receiving a gentleman, and a stranger; and before you had spoken ten words to me, I felt my prejudices against you vanish."

"Come, Clermont, give me your hand; you have made a choice for which I thank you, and will make the family thank you, or they shall not call me cousin, I can tell you. And may she teach her children to tread in her paths! for she is indeed the virtuous woman, 'whose price is far above rubies.'"

MURDER WILL OUT.

In the last year of the American war, colonel Dunbar and captain Apreece, the former a Scotchman, the latter a native of North Wales, were taken prisoners by a French frigate and carried into Calais on their way from America. From Calais they were removed to Rouen in Normandy, where they hoped to be prisoners on their parole: but in this respect their expectations were cruelly disappointed, as an Englishman had recently broken his parole, and his countrymen were therefore forced to suffer for his guilt.—Consequently, colonel Dunbar and captain Apreece vainly protested that they were incapable of following the bad example which their countrymen had set them:

no attention was paid to their assurances; and all the indulgence shown to them was, care to accommodate them in the very best place of confinement in the city.

The apartments provided for them were really commodious. They had, indeed, only one sitting-room, but they had separate bed-rooms. The only inconvenience was, that as they were at the top of the house, and therefore might have commanded a fine and extensive view, the windows were so high and narrow, that they were as useless to them in point of prospect as a sky-light would have been. However, after a few weeks' confinement, they contrived to bribe the jailor, though contrary to orders, to bring them steps, by which they could reach the window and enjoy the view of the surrounding country; and being also indulged with books, the hours of their captivity were less painful than they at first promised to be. But to Dunbar they soon

ceased to be painful, and they became productive to him even of delight.

The windows looked immediately on a large field or orchard, walled round, which joined the garden of a nunnery; and in the field, as well as the garden, some of the novices and boarders were allowed to walk; and as the prison was the only building which overlooked the field, the windows were such as to preclude all suspicion that the young ladies would be exposed to the observation of the prisoners. One day, while Dunbar was amusing himself with looking at some novices with an excellent telescope which he had brought with him, and, like a true John Bull, was flattering his national pride with the idea that there was more true beauty in one of his countrywomen than in all the girls whom he then beheld, one of those striking, interesting figures entered the field, who if once seen can never be forgotten,—one of those figures

which lead one immediately to inquire, "Who is she, and whence does she come?"—A tall, graceful, fair, blooming girl met his view; whose full and finely formed person seemed to speak her more than twenty; but whose youthful expression, and the lightness of whose motions, had all the winning charms of early youth. —This lady, though she wore a long white veil, had no other mark of the dress of a novice; and Dunbar flattered himself that she was only a boarder. He saw, too, or he thought he saw, that the novices paid her great attention, and therefore he concluded she was of rank: but whoever or whatever she was, whether an Englishwoman or a Frenchwoman, he soon felt that to gaze on her was rapture; and when she left the field he stood looking at the window still, as if he lived but in the hope of seeing her again.

"I wonder whether Apreece saw her too," thought Dunbar: and though he

wished that he might, for one reason,—namely, that he might talk of her to him,—a feeling resembling jealousy made him hope that he had not seen her, and that the discovered treasure was all his own. However, Apreece had seen her, and had admired her; but he was very indifferent about seeing her again, and could not help bantering Dunbar on falling in love at first sight.

"Indeed," answered Dunbar, "till to-day, I thought 'love at first sight' not only absurd, but impossible."

"I know not whether it be the latter, but I am sure it is the former," said Apreece; and Dunbar felt already too much in earnest to bear to expose his feelings to be laughed at by continuing the conversation.

The next day, the following day, and indeed every day for a week together, this fair vision haunted the nunnery field. Sometimes she was there alone, and at

those times a pensiveness almost amounting to sadness stole over her soft features, and Dunbar began to fear that she was in love. Who she was, his jailor could not inform him—he only supposed she was "*une jeune dame en pension*;" and Dunbar guessed as much himself; while Apreece rallied Dunbar unmercifully on his romantic passion, and declared that he saw nothing so very captivating in the incognita. "My cousin Mary Cadogan," said he, "would be twice as handsome if she did not squint a little."

"Squint!" exclaimed Dunbar, "can you think of putting a woman who squints in any degree of comparison with my beautiful incognita?"

"Every one to his taste," replied Apreece; "and my cousin Mary is the girl for me: not but what I must own that the incognita has something so striking in her face and person, that if once seen she can never be forgotten; and I

should know her again even if I saw her on the top of a Welch mountain. But to own the truth, she is too old for me; I dare say she is at least four-and-twenty, and there is a look of intelligence, dignity, and independence about her, which will never be in the woman of my choice. I do not like your noun substantive women, I prefer a noun adjective; I like your little, timid, fearful creatures, that look up to one for protection;—fearful souls who scream at sight of a cow—tremble at a flash of lightning—and cannot even cross a kennel without help; for it gives one, Dunbar, such a sweet sensation of one's own superiority and importance, to see oneself obliged to offer one's protection to the dear tremblers."

"Indeed!" replied Dunbar, smiling: "I would rather derive my sensation of my own superiority and importance from a consciousness of my own worth,—not from a comparison with the weakness of

a trembling woman. I dislike a masculine woman as much as you do; but I confess that I should prefer for my wife a woman not apt to be rendered incapable of conducting herself, or educating her children, by the impulse of ungrounded fears, but one whose habitual fortitude might, if necessary, be capable of supporting mine."

"Well, you may prefer a woman like the oak, if you please; but give me one resembling the ivy."

"Oh, my friend," cried Dunbar, "beware of these ivy women, they are terrible encroachers! Have you not often seen the ivy wind and wind round the trunk of the tree, continually getting higher and higher, till at length it reaches the top of it; and has spread itself so widely round, that the poor tree is become quite invisible, and a seeming non-entity? Even so it is with your ivy or noun-adjective women;—they gradually wind themselves

with seeming humility and submission round a man's will, till at length the poor husband, like the oak above mentioned, is a mere cypher in his family, and the expected tyrant becomes himself a slave where he expected to make one."

"May be so, may be so; but depend on it *I* will choose a very young wife, one who has not yet learnt to have a will or a preference: I will have one whose mind shall be a sheet of blank paper, in which I and I only shall write what I please."

"What a vain fellow you must be, Apreece! How fond you must be of your own mind, to wish your wife's mind to be a mere mirror to reflect yours!"

"Call me what you please," answered Apreece, "but believe me I should delight to hear my wife echoing all my opinions, and modestly adding 'as Mr. Apreece says.'"

"If this be all you wish to hear, why mar-

ry at all?—You had better buy a young parrot, and teach it to speak after you. No,—give me a rational, thinking, yet modest woman, who must be capable of having an opinion of her own; and who, if she surrenders her will to mine, does it not from imbecility, but tenderness: let her countenance beam with *original* intelligence, self-derived, not borrowed: in short, let her——"

"Be exactly like the incognita," cried Apreece; "and there she is, looking as intelligent and as lofty-minded as any poor foolish man can wish."

She was indeed in sight, and he had soon neither eyes nor ears for any thing but herself.

Soon after, Apreece was seized with the symptoms of a fever; and on the third day he was so alarmed for his own safety, that Dunbar promised him he would set up that night in his own apart-

ment, and be ready to attend his summons at a moment's notice.

He therefore sat up, reading, writing, or meditating, when the first rays of morning shone into his room. "How finely the dawn must appear," thought Dunbar, "gilding the dark towers of the nunnery!" especially as he fancied that nunnery contained the being whom he so tenderly admired. In an instant the steps were set against the window, and he ascended them.—But what words can express the horror and distraction which he felt on beholding the scene which awaited him! The day dawned gloriously, but he saw it not;—his eyes were fixed on his incognita, who was kneeling on the ground by the side of a young and well-dressed man, to all appearance dead, and newly murdered, for a stiletto was sticking in his bosom; and this stiletto the incognita plucked from

his bleeding breast, then threw it in a piece of stagnant water beside her. Dunbar scarcely breathed, nay he was scarcely conscious that he existed; but in motionless horror he stood watching for what was to follow.

The next step taken by the lady, who looked fearfully round as she did it, was to fill the pockets of the deceased with some large and loose stones which lay near her; and then clasping her hands as in agony first, and raising her blue eyes to heaven, she rolled the body into the water, and stood eagerly and anxiously gazing on it as it gradually sunk. At length it disappeared; and, as if she felt relieved by this circumstance, she looked up to heaven again, apparently in thankfulness; and having first carefully, by means of the water, removed every trace of blood from the ground and her own hands, she slowly re-entered the garden, and closed the gate upon her, leaving

Dunbar petrified with horror and amazement, and cursing his own miserable fate that had doomed him to be in love with a murderess, for such she could not but appear in his eyes; since, had the young man been a self-murderer, why should she have been so anxious to conceal the horrid deed?

While these dreadful and overwhelming thoughts and suspicions were passing in his mind, and while he felt that if he did not disclose what he had seen he was an accomplice of the murder, yet could not prevail on himself to expose the life of his still dear incognita, he heard Apreece's voice desiring him to come to him immediately. He found him dreadfully agitated, and with an expression of horror on his countenance.

"Oh, my dear friend!" cried Apreece, "such a sight have I seen! Oh, that devil in the shape of an angel! Who could have thought it? But I never liked her,

and I shall rejoice to bring her to justice."

"What do you mean?" replied Dunbar, turning very pale.

"Why—I felt so suffocated that I got up to the window just now to breathe the air if I could,—and there if I did not see your incognita, having just killed a man, roll him into the water to hide what she had done! But by St. David she sh'an't escape so; for if I do not inform against her, may I never see Wales again!"

A feeling like that of death came over Dunbar as his friend vowed to give up the incognita to justice; and wholly governed by the dictates of passion, he endeavoured to convince him, though with little hope of success, that he must have been in a dream.

"A dream, indeed!" replied Apreece; "no, no—you shall not persuade me out of my senses."

These words suggested to Dunbar a

means of saving his incognita, whom, though he believed her to have been guilty of murder, he could not bear to see exposed to punishment;—for how did he know what provocation the deceased had given her? Perhaps he had attempted her honour;—perhaps he had murdered her father, or ruined her sister;—perhaps she was herself insane. All these excuses for her guilt presented themselves to his mind; and the consequence was, that he artfully replied to all Apreece's expressions of horror, and details of what he had seen, with shrugs of the shoulders, with suppressed laughs, and with earnest requests that he would keep himself quiet, and endeavour to sleep;—till at last the irascible Welchman could bear it no longer; but starting up in his bed, and swearing a great oath, he said he would not be treated as if he was mad, when he knew he was as much in his senses as ever he had been in his life.

"Poor soul!" replied Dunbar, shaking his head; and Apreece, undressed as he was, jumped out of bed, and vowed that if he persisted in believing him to be in a delirium, he would have satisfaction that moment.

"Poor fellow! poor fellow!" cried Dunbar: "you forget that we have neither swords nor pistols: let me persuade you to go to bed again."

At this moment the jailor, hearing a noise, entered; and in vain did Apreece relate to him what he he had seen in the field,—for Dunbar hinted to him the deranged state of the relater; on which, exclaiming, "*Ah, le pauvre homme!*" he paid not the smallest attention to what Apreece said, but declared he would go directly for the surgeon. Apreece immediately began to protest that he was in his perfect senses, and that he would fight any man who said he was not.

"Yes," cried Dunbar maliciously, "he has been challenging me to single combat."

"*Ah, le pauvre homme!*" again exclaimed the jailor; and Apreece, provoked beyond bearing, flung a book at his head; on which the terrified Frenchman began calling, "*Diable!—La Fleur! Jaques! Victor! vite, vite! venez, venez ici!*" and Dunbar, spite of his distress, could scarcely help laughing at the grotesque appearance of Apreece, and the comic expression of fear on the jailor's face as he beheld the threatening looks and attitude of the Welchman, and attributed them to an attack of phrensy.

"Come, come," said Dunbar, "do get into bed; for this violence and this conduct will never convince us that you are in your senses."

"That's true," cried Apreece, beginning to feel himself exhausted by his exertions; and Dunbar, seeing him lie quietly down and look thoughtful, began to hope that he had convinced him he was in a delirium, and that the scene in the

garden was merely the fancy of his distempered brain.

"How long have you felt this disorder coming on?" asked Dunbar, with a look of pity.

"Disorder!—Why now, colonel Dunbar, do you really expect to persuade me that I am mad, and did not see the incognita as I described her?"

"To be sure I do."

"I tell you that I saw her as plain as I see you."

"And how was she dressed?"

"In a hat and feathers, and a fine gay shawl."

"Poor soul!" provokingly muttered Dunbar. "So then, this lady whom you and I never saw in any other head-dress than a veil;—for answer me, did you ever see her before dressed in the manner you now mention?"—

"No, never—I must own that."

"—So then this young lady dresses her

self up in fine shawls and feathers in the middle of the night, and comes out into a field to commit murder! A likely story this, indeed. No, my good friend; it is much easier for me to believe that your illness has ended in delirium, than that this wonderful relation of yours should be true."

"I protest, if I don't begin to believe that you are right," said Apreece, after a pause; "I certainly am very ill; and yet I am sure I see the incognita in her hat and feathers and shawl, as plainly as if she now stood before me."

"Ah! that's a proof it was fancy; for the image you see appears as strongly to you now, though you are convinced that it is not before you, as when you fancied it was."

"Well—really now—I—I am convinced that you are right, and I will not make the deposition which I intended."

Dunbar was so delighted at hearing this, that he could hardly help hugging the dupe that he had made. "Now then," said he to himself, "she is safe! and may live to repent of her crime, provided, as I see no reason to doubt, she murdered the unhappy man, whose body she consigned to the stagnant water."

Here the entrance of the jailor with two of his men, the surgeon and a strait waistcoat, put a stop to any further conversation; and Apreece, rising up in his bed, and seizing the table near him, protested that he would throw it at the first man who should approach him with that infernal waistcoat. Dunbar found it therefore necessary to interfere; and he assured the surgeon that his friend's reason was returned, and that *he* would answer for his remaining quiet the rest of the night. He then prevailed on Apreece to let the surgeon feel his pulse; who having given it as his opinion that the patient's fever had subsided, Apreece was

allowed to take his rest; and Dunbar, having seen him drop asleep, retired to his own apartment.

"So, I have made him think himself insane!" thought Dunbar, as he threw himself into bed. "Scarcely can my motive reconcile me to the consciousness of having been guilty of such gross deceit: but, alas! it is I am the lunatic; for I love, still passionately love, a woman whom I have reason to think guilty of the crime of murder! one, too, whose name I know not, and never may know, and whom I may never behold again!"

The next day, Dunbar, as usual, watched to behold his incognita; and she appeared in the field dressed in her veil as she had formerly been, and not in the finery of the night before: but her cheek was pale as death, and her eyes heavy; and as she passed by the piece of water, he saw her shudder, and turn up her fine eyes to heaven.

"Apreece!" cried Dunbar, going into

his room, "there is the incognita again in her white veil: perhaps she has not such a variety in her wardrobe as your fancy gave her."

"Say no more on that subject, say no more, Dunbar; it is a mysterious business, and time only can clear it up."

Dunbar did not much like this answer, but he resolved to drop the subject.

"But tell me," continued Apreece, "if this incognita had been ugly, instead of handsome, should you have been so very eager to endeavour to convince me that I saw her in a suspicious situation only in a dream?"

Dunbar was so completely taken by surprise, that at first he could not answer: at last, however, he forced himself to reply, that had he not well studied and admired the expression of countenance of the incognita, he could not have been so immediately struck with the impossibility of her guilt; and that had she been ugly, he

should probably neither have looked at her, nor been interested in her fate.

"May be so," replied Apreece; "but I firmly believe that had not the incognita been handsome, I should not have been so peremptorily pronounced delirious: however, as I said before, I could swear to her again wherever I saw her."

The succeeding evening Apreece was well enough to sit up, and he was anxious to mount the steps and look out of the window; and Dunbar was preparing to assist him, when, having first mounted the steps himself, he saw the incognita dressed in the remarkable hat and shawl in which Apreece and he had seen her on the night of the murder. Dunbar instantly felt that if Apreece beheld her in that dress, he would be assured that he had seen her in reality, and not in fancy, and would proceed against her accordingly. But how should he prevent Apreece's getting up the steps without exciting his

suspicions?—He was desperate; and as no good plan offered itself to his mind, he fixed on a bad one; but luckily it succeeded. He contrived to fall as he descended the steps; and pretending to be very much hurt, he found no difficulty in persuading Apreece that he was unable to help him up the steps, and that it would be dangerous for him to attempt it alone.

But the incognita might come again in her remarkable dress, and he could not always prevent Apreece's seeing her as he had done then; and Dunbar became miserable and anxious,—when the joyful news of peace being made reached Rouen, and an exchange of prisoners took place. The news arrived at the prison at a very critical moment for the incognita and Dunbar; for the latter had just seen her in the dress mentioned above, and Apreece was just going to mount the steps in Dunbar's room, in order to look into the field, without his being able to prevent it, when

the jailor entered the room, and showed them the order for their release. Apreece in a moment leaped off the steps, and, dancing about the room in a transport of joy, exclaimed, "Now I shall see dear little Wales again! and I 'll go pack up directly."

"And I shall see Scotland again," thought Dunbar, sighing, "but where—O where, and when shall I see the incognita?" He then hastily ascended the steps, but she was gone;—and what excuse could he make for not leaving the prison that evening, that he might watch to see her once more?—None. Nor could he hesitate to set off for Scotland immediately, as a letter was brought him, desiring him to proceed directly home, as his father was very ill, and begged to see him before he died. "This then decides the business," cried Dunbar; "go I must—I cannot sacrifice to the indulgence of a mad passion my duty to the

best of fathers ! Come, Apreece, are you ready ?" cried he, entering his room, " for I must go this instant."

" I am sorry to hear that," replied Apreece, " for I can't go of a day or two."

" No !" answered Dunbar, starting and turning very pale ; for he did not like to leave Apreece behind him, lest he should, not being quite convinced that what he had described was a feverish dream, make such inquiries in the city as might lead to a discovery of the incognita's crime. However, he could not prevail on Apreece to accompany him, and he dared not stay for Apreece ; therefore, with a heavy heart he gazed once more on the nunnery-field, and, bidding Apreece farewell, set off for the coast.

His suspicions of Apreece were not ill-founded. He intended to stay a day at Rouen for the purpose of inquiring whether any gentleman had lately disappeared in a mysterious manner ; for now he

was quite well again, he was not all disposed to think that he had not seen the horrid scene which he had related. But the result of his inquiries did not throw any light on this mysterious affair. "However, murder will out," said Apreece to himself, "and some time or other the truth of this story will be known; and some day or other, too, I will visit Rouen, if it be only from curiosity to learn something concerning this strange business."

He then returned to Wales, and Dunbar by that time was far on his road towards his paternal seat. He arrived time enough to see his father alive; but no cares, no assiduity, (and Dunbar was exemplary in both,) could prolong his life. He died in a short time after his son's arrival; and Dunbar (now sir Malcolm Dunbar) saw himself the independent master of a fine fortune and a very romantic and beautiful, but lonely, estate in the Highlands. But as he tenderly loved

his father, he could not bear to remain on a spot where every thing reminded him of the loss which he had sustained: he therefore set off for England, and went to Brighthelmstone, resolved to sail from thence to Dieppe, and proceed to Rouen, in order to make those inquiries which filial duty had forbidden when he was released from his prison there; for the image of the incognita haunted him continually, and the latter was gradually swallowing up even the recollection of his father; when Mrs. Malden, a friend of his in the neighbourhood, who saw and pitied his evident dejection, informed him that she should soon be able to introduce him to a young lady, whose society would, she trusted, rouse him from the melancholy under which he evidently was labouring.

"Were my melancholy capable of being removed by the society of young ladies," replied Dunbar, "it would have been gone by this time; for what a num-

ber of young ladies have I associated with since I have been waiting here for a favourable wind!"

"Yes—every day young ladies; but the one I mean is, in point of beauty, wisdom, accomplishments, and virtue, the wonder of her sex."

"Indeed!—But perhaps her style of beauty may not please me."

"You must be very difficult indeed, then;—but pray describe the beauty you most admire."

Dunbar obeyed: and he minutely described the beauty of his incognita.

"I protest," cried Mrs. Malden, "one would imagine you were describing my friend miss Arundel herself!"

"Indeed! Then I shall certainly look at her," answered Dunbar, sighing deeply, "even if I do not like her."

"And to look at her and not like her is impossible." Here the conversation ended; but it left an impression on Dun-

bar's mind. He felt the necessity there was for his endeavouring to forget a woman of whom he knew nothing, and was likely to know nothing, and who he had the strongest reason to believe had committed an atrocious crime; and he was anxious to see this admirable miss Arundel, in hopes that her charms might drive the image of the incognita from his breast.

In a day or two after he had the above-mentioned conversation with Mrs. Malden, she told him that madame Altieri and her daughter were arrived at the house which they had hired near Brighton; and Dunbar learnt that miss Arundel, who was then about five-and-twenty, was the daughter of madame Altieri, by her first husband, Mr. Arundel; a man whom, though he was possessed of every charm to excite love, and every virtue to command esteem, she had married against her own consent, and therefore had never loved. That immediately on his death,

she had married a signor Altieri, an Italian gentleman, whom she had met with in France; and that by him she had one son, Enrico Altieri, on whom she fondly doted, while her daughter by Mr. Arundel she regarded with the same cold esteem which she entertained for her excellent father: and though Enrico's youth had been marked by almost every vice, and her daughter's by every virtue, it was notorious that madame Altieri saw nothing to love in Editha, and every thing to love in Enrico. Such are sometimes the caprices of parents! But madame Altieri saw in her son the image of the husband whom she adored, and whose loss she tenderly bemoaned; and in Editha she saw the exact resemblance of the husband whom she never loved, and whose death she almost rejoiced at. But Altieri, amidst all his excesses, had some good qualities; and amongst these was the ardent affection which he bore his sister—an affec-

tion which Editha as ardently returned. However, he did not choose to reside with his mother and sister, for he had formed nearer and dearer ties; and at the time of madame Altieri's taking up her residence near Brighton, he had for some time been residing at Florence.

At length Mrs. Malden fixed a day to receive madame Altieri and miss Arundel, and to introduce to them sir Malcolm Dunbar: but before the day arrived he had heard so many instances related of miss Arundel's charity, candour, and humanity, that he was very impatient for the arrival of the expected dinner-hour; and he hastened to Mrs. Malden's with a mind more awakened to receive pleasure than he had had since he left Rouen.

Half an hour before the time appointed, he arrived at Mrs. Malden's. The ladies were walking in the garden; and as he approached them he saw, with a beating heart, that the lady whom he con-

cluded to be miss Arundel had the height, figure, and air of his incognita: but when she turned round on hearing Mrs. Malden exclaim, "Oh, here is sir Malcolm Dunbar!" what must have been his sensations to behold in this far-praised miss Arundel, his incognita herself! Surprise and emotion completely overpowered him; and had he not caught hold of a tree near him, he must have fallen to the ground.

"What is the matter? You are ill, sir Malcolm," cried Mrs. Malden, hastening to him; while miss Arundel, giving him a bottle of salts, with a hand of extreme beauty and whiteness, begged him to make use of it, in a voice whose tones went to his soul. He took the salts, and gazed at the white hand which held them; but he hastily averted his eyes again, for "oh!" thought he, "have I not seen that lovely hand stained with blood!"

In a few moments recollecting that he could not disclose to any one the cause of

his indisposition, he struggled with his feelings, and overcame them; and apologizing to the ladies for the alarm and trouble which he had occasioned them, he offered his arm to Mrs. Malden, and accompanied them into the house, not having yet dared to lift his eyes to miss Arundel. Nor when they were seated at dinner could he venture to look at her otherwise than by stealth; and Mrs. Malden soon observed that her fair friend had made an impression on sir Malcolm, but that the expression of his eyes when he looked at her was that of tenderness not unmixed with sadness.

Madame Altieri in the course of conversation said, "I hear, sir, that you are but just returned from France?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Dunbar, blushing as he spoke.

"You were a prisoner there? In what part of France were you confined, sir?"

"At—at Rouen;" and he trembled and changed colour as he said it.

"At Rouen!" exclaimed both the ladies: "we are only just arrived from thence: I wonder we never met you in society there," observed madame Altieri.

"I was not allowed to go out, but was confined in prison."

"In prison! In what part of the town, sir?" asked Editha.

"I—really—I can't tell, ma'am," answered Dunbar, afraid of wounding her feelings by talking of the nunnery; and the conversation dropped.

Soon after, Mrs. Malden mentioned a dreadful murder which had lately been committed by a young lady on a gentleman who had paid his addresses to her, and then married another woman; and Dunbar, forgetting himself, instantly stamped on Mrs. Malden's foot to give her a hint not to tell such a story. Mrs.

Malden looked at him with the utmost surprise in her countenance; and Dunbar, recollecting the absurdity of the action, as he could not inform her why he had done so, apologized for his awkwardness, and Mrs. Malden went on with her story.

Dunbar could not help stealing a look at miss Arundel. She listened without any apparent emotion; and though one story of a murder led to others, her cheek retained its bloom, and she joined in the conversation. But madame Altieri observed that a German baron, whom she and her daughter knew very well, disappeared while she was at Rouen, in a very mysterious manner, and that it was supposed he had been murdered by his servant, who had immediately absconded. During this speech Dunbar again looked at Editha: but her serenity and her bloom were vanished—her cheek and lip were colourless—her eyes cast on the ground, and her countenance was the image of woe.

"Now then, the right string is touched; but, though guilty, she repents," thought Dunbar; "and I rejoice that I prevented the disclosure of her crime. If Apreece never meets with her, I trust that she is safe from discovery for ever."

In a short time the conversation changed to livelier subjects, and miss Arundel attempted to be cheerful again: but it was only an attempt; and the evening, which had begun with gaiety, ended gloomily; for neither Dunbar nor Editha was disposed to talk, and the company separated early.

Such was Mrs. Malden's desire to promote an union between sir Malcolm and miss Arundel, as she thought equally well of both parties, that though Dunbar on principle wished to avoid Editha, lest his passion for her should increase so much as to make him capable of overlooking the crime of which he more than suspected her, he could not withstand Mrs.

Malden's repeated invitations to make one of parties on the water and on horseback with her beautiful young friend; till Dunbar, more than ever in love with her, and perceiving that his attentions were favourably received by her, found it was impossible to struggle with his passion,—and he now was continually representing to himself that he did not *see* miss Arundel stab the gentleman; therefore he could not be sure that she was the actual murderer; and he had watched her countenance when murder by a female hand was talked of, but he did not observe that she changed countenance, or had the look of conscious guilt. However, he had doubts, dreadful doubts and suspicions still, and he resolved that they should, if possible, be cleared up before he owned his attachment to the lovely object of it.

One day, at Mrs. Malden's table, a gentleman begged leave to mention the

case of a very honest and industrious cottager and family in the neighbourhood, that was reduced to the extreme of wretchedness by the loss of two cows, and having their hay-stack burnt down, while the cottager himself lay ill of a bad fever, and his wife, only just recovered of a dangerous lying-in, was scarcely able to nurse him, and was too poor to procure him better attendance. A subscription for these poor people was proposed immediately, and amply contributed to. But Dunbar was never contented, as many people are, with giving money to the unfortunate on such occasions; he well knew that attention and personal observation are often of as much use as pecuniary aid, and he resolved to rise early the next day and visit the poor sufferers. Accordingly, while most of the young and the fashionable were as yet asleep, he arose and set off for the cottage. The door was unbarred; and having given a gentle

tap at it, Dunbar ventured to walk in;—when the first object whom he beheld was miss Arundel, with a half-clothed child on her lap, and another standing at her knee playing with her watch, sitting by the bed-side of some one who seemed fast asleep.

"Hush!" cried Editha, blushing, smiling, and putting her finger to her lip. She then informed him in a whisper that the poor woman was gone to procure a nurse for her husband, and that she was to be nurse till her return.

Before Dunbar could answer, the sick man awoke, and Editha putting the child into Dunbar's arms arose, and told him she should give him some broth; "for remember," added she, "the doctor says you want sustenance more than medicine."

Immediately she warmed some broth on the fire, and, supporting the head of the invalid, made him swallow it:—

then, having settled his pillow for him, she left him to compose himself to sleep again; and turning to Dunbar, who was nursing the child to the best of his ability, she laughed, and told him he was not so awkward as she expected.

"You seem to be quite at home here," replied he, "as well as in the business of nursing. May I ask how long you have been acquainted in this cottage?"

"Some hours now."

"I thought, not more; for when the subscription was set on foot you seemed a stranger to the objects of it."

"True:—but by the feelings which led you hither so early, you know, it was impossible for me to remain so; for the poor man was said to be in a bad fever, with a sick wife, and not able to procure either help or sustenance. I own it did my heart good to see the readiness with which a large sum was instantly subscribed, while the gentleman whose eloquence

had succeeded so well yesterday meant to try the effect of it again to-day:—but then, thought I, while this golden harvest is reaping what may become of the poor invalid? He may die for want of aid and food to-night! The idea was insupportable: therefore, as my mother's indisposition made it not remarkable that I should order my carriage early, I went away—"

"And drove immediately hither, I suppose?"

"Drove hither!—Do you think I would have my chariot be seen at the door of a hovel? or that I would insult the poor by marking so pointedly the difference of our situations?"

"Forgive me—I forgot myself."

"No;—I came hither on foot, and desired a surgeon to be sent for. He came, and informed me that the poor man was sinking for want of good and sufficient food. Oh, how this relieved my mind!

for the remedy could be procured immediately."

"And I dare say you sat up here all night?"

"No, not all the night; but I rose early, and came hither to see that medicine and food were properly given:—and I suspect that you came hither for the same purpose."

"I did,—but I was not considerate enough to come hither last night; and believe me," cried he, respectfully kissing her hand, "I am not sorry to feel myself your inferior."

"I see no merit in what I have done," said Editha. "All that one can do is little enough to—"

Here Dunbar started, and interrupting her said very gravely, "All that one can do is little enough sometimes to atone for sins of omission and commission. How many virtues that we now admire, would

prove, could we read the hearts of the performers of them, only expiatory and atoning acts for some secret and monstrous crime!"

"My good friend," replied Editha, smiling as Dunbar fixed his eyes on her face, "it is to be hoped that your and my good actions are neither expiatory, nor performed as atonements; I trust we are both too innocent for that; at least I assure you my sins are those of omission, not commission."

As she said this, Dunbar gazed earnestly at her; and her countenance seemed so radiant with the cheerfulness of a mind at peace with itself, that he resolved, in spite of what he had seen, to believe her wholly innocent; and grasping her hand, he exclaimed, "I believe you, upon my soul—I believe you are an angel of purity!" Then folding his arms, and gazing on her while she nursed one of the children and kept the other quiet by alternate

amusement and caresses, he thought of his seat in the Highlands, of the cottages on his estates, and what a blessing he should bestow on his cottagers and dependents, could he give them Editha for their lady!

From this charming dream he was awakened by Editha's asking him, how it happened that he did not know in what quarter of the city at Rouen his prison was situated? At the mention of Rouen, and of his prison, all his sweet visions fled; and he no longer beheld Editha as the benefactress and idol of his Highlanders, but as he saw her at dawn in the field of the nunnery.

"O God!" he exclaimed, and Editha asked him if he was ill. "A sudden pang," he replied: and then with great effort he answered, that the windows of his prison were very high, but that he believed they looked on the precincts of a nunnery.

"Indeed!" cried Editha, starting and

turning pale as death; and she dropped the conversation. At length the cottager's wife returned home accompanied by a nurse; and Editha, having promised to see them again in the course of the morning, got up to go away.

"Allow me to attend you," said Dunbar.

"Excuse me," replied Editha, blushing, "but I wish to avoid giving occasion for impertinent remarks: therefore I do not choose, by suffering you to accompany me, to run the risk of having it said that I walk with you before breakfast, and when fine ladies and fine gentlemen too are usually in bed."

"What! are not you above minding foolish reports?"

"No—nor do I wish to be. I consider attention to decorum as one of the great bulwarks of female virtue: and as I am Editha Arundel, of a certain rank in life; and you are sir Malcolm Dunbar, of some

consequence also; and as the example of persons in high is apt to influence those in lower life; I should be very sorry to think it possible that we by our example had encouraged two young persons, not perhaps with as many motives to conduct themselves with propriety as we have, to take solitary and early walks, and expose themselves to censure, if not to danger."

"Granted.—I should be sorry too.—And now you put the matter on a right footing: but suppose that (putting example out of the question) we were seen coming out of this cottage together, and walking home tête-à-tête, should you not despise the suspicions and censures of the busy and the meddling, as your own conscience would assure you that you deserved them not?"

"Conscience is an awful thing," replied Editha, "and not to be called-in on trifling occasions: conscience is like a powerful and superior friend, not to be re-

sorted to but in difficult and important seasons. I should think it a sort of mock heroic, if, on a person's saying to me, 'How indecorous it was in you to be seen coming out of a cottage with sir Malcolm Dunbar, on such a morning early!' I was to answer with the air of a tragedy queen, my conscience acquits me of harm, madam, in this business, and therefore I scorn the opinion of the world. No:—I had much rather in such trifles make the opinion of the world my rule of action."

"But suppose you were accused of a great crime—would the consciousness of innocence not enable you to scorn the opinion of the world?"

"I have thought a great deal on this subject," replied Editha with a varying colour and a faltering voice; "and it is perhaps from a conviction of the sacred office of conscience, that I am not fond of appealing to it on light occasions. Con-

science is, as it were, the Deity's deputy on earth; and if her decisions are in one's favour, one may, even from the depth of misery and seeming guilt, lift up an eye of hope and confidence to Heaven, and set at defiance the contempt and judgments of the world."

"But is this an easy matter? Could you be happy if involved in unjust obloquy, though your conscience bore testimony to your innocence?"

"Not happy, perhaps, but contented—, or rather *more*; for I should endeavour to detach my affections in that case from every thing worldly, and look to a better world, as the abode of that retributive justice which I despaired of here." As she said this, her eyes filled with tears, and wishing Dunbar good morning she left him in the cottage. And he, as soon as he concluded that she had nearly reached home, full of pensive thoughts, but also

of increased admiration of miss Arundel, and conviction of her innocence, returned to his lodgings.

The next evening he went to call miss Arundel and Mrs. Malden to walk on the Steine; and he shuddered with horror, when Editha appeared in the very hat and shawl which she wore on the fatal morning in the nunnery field!

"Did you ever see any thing so odd, yet so becoming, as miss Arundel's French hat and handkerchief?" said Mrs. Malden.

Dunbar only bowed an answer, his heart was too full to allow him to speak: at last however he faltered out, "Whatever miss Arundel wears becomes her." But the manner in which he spoke this was so cold, that Editha laughed, and said, she was sure he disliked her dress.

At this moment his servant came to say that a gentleman waited for him at his lodgings, who was only going to stay in

Brighton while his horses were baiting. Dunbar instantly therefore followed his servant: but before he got to the end of the Steine, he saw Apreece (for it was he who had sent for him) rapidly approaching him. In an instant the danger of Editha struck him. She was in a dress too peculiar not to strike any one; and should Apreece see her face and her dress too, he knew that her dreadful secret would be instantly divulged. With frantic and desperate haste, therefore, he ran forward to meet him; and feigning sudden indisposition, he leaned on Apreece's arm; and begging for God's sake that he would lead him to his lodgings, for that he was very ill, he completely took off his attention from the company on the Steine: and having by this means secured Apreece's stay at his apartments during the short time that he was to remain at Brighton, he felt assured that he had saved the unconscious Editha from a most

alarming danger. And Apreece having, when he left him, declared that he was going on a tour of some months, Dunbar felt relieved from all fears for Editha for the present; but he resolved to do all he could to make her dislike her French hat and shawl, in order to prevent her from wearing them again.

The next evening he accompanied madame Altieri and her daughter in her carriage to see a gentleman's seat and grounds at a short distance from Brighton. When they returned, the sun was nearly set, and that twilight stealing over the landscape which resembles the dawning of day. At this moment the postillion, who was rather intoxicated, drove over a little boy who was running across the road; and Dunbar, on hearing the scream of the child, jumped out of the carriage, and reached the ground in safety, though the horses were going on.

"For God's sake stop the carriage!"

cried Editha, "I must get out, too." And the man stopped.

"No—do not get out, I beg," said Dunbar: "why should you distress yourself?"

But Editha was resolved—she was sure she might be of use; and regarding neither her mother's nor Dunbar's solicitations, but telling the servant she should walk home, the carriage and madame Altieri proceeded without her. Dunbar by this time had raised the poor boy, and found him bleeding on the forehead, but not otherwise hurt.

"Let me see the wound, I think I can bind it up," cried Editha. So saying, she desired the boy to lie down on his back; then wiping the dust from the wound, she stooped over him, and bound up his head with her handkerchief. Dunbar stood pale and motionless, gazing on her till he could bear to gaze no longer; for her attitude, her situation, her shawl

waving in the breeze, and her long feathers playing in the gray and yellow twilight, as he had seen them before in the first beams of morning, recalled so forcibly to his recollection the dreadful scene, which for the sake of his own peace he was constantly wishing to forget, that he leaned against a tree, and groaned in agony.

Editha at this moment had finished binding up the boy's head; and having given him money to make him some amends for the terror and hurt he had experienced, she had desired him to hasten home, and promised to see him the next day: but the sight of Dunbar's distress surprised and alarmed her so much, that, running to him, she anxiously demanded what was the matter, and what she could do for him.

"Thank God! you have changed your position," said he, "and I can now look at you without horror."

"Without horror!" cried Editha, starting: "and have I been to you an object of horror, Dunbar?"

"Yes," replied he, fixing his eyes on her face, for he thought the moment for clearing up his doubts was now come: "your dress, your situation, and the twilight, recall so forcibly to my memory a dreadful dream that I had in my prison at Rouen, that I could not bear to look at you any longer."

"A dream, say you?—what dream?" cried Editha in a faltering voice.

"I dreamt that I saw," answered Dunbar, "a fair creature exactly like you in dress as well as form, kneeling at the first dawn of day, beside a corpse, from whose bleeding heart she snatched a dagger, and afterwards buried the dagger and the corpse in the water beside her!"

Editha, who had grasped Dunbar's arm when he began his narration, as he went on had gradually unloosed her hold;

and when he had ended, she sunk down in a swoon at his feet; while he, calling her by a thousand fond and tender names, hung over her in frantic anguish, and Editha, as life returned, heard from Dunbar's lips that declaration of ardent passion which she had long in secret fondly wished to hear. But at what a moment did she now hear it! when he had just confessed that he had reason to believe she was a murderess! and when she was experiencing the agonizing reflection that her fatal secret was known to one person, and might perhaps be known to others!

When she was recovered enough to be able to stand and speak, she started from Dunbar's supporting arm, and mournfully exclaimed, "This was no dream, Dunbar! O, would to Heaven it were! But the fatal secret is known to you, I find, and my life is consequently in your power."

Dunbar was about to speak; but, interrupting him, she said that the greatest

kindness he could do her would be to tell her every particular of his discovery, and its consequences, and whether she had been seen by any one else. Dunbar then reluctantly promised compliance. He began by relating his first view of her—the passion which he immediately entertained for her—his misery in consequence of what he saw in the nunnery field, and on discovering that Apreece had seen it too; together with all that passed between him and Apreece down to the means he had taken to prevent her from being seen by him during his short visit to Brighton.

"It seems then," observed Editha, when he had ended, "that I owe my life twice to your generous exertions. And would to heaven, Dunbar, that I might try to reward you by devoting to you the life which you have tried to save! for the love which you entertain for me, proves to me that you must think me innocent of the crime of murder, spite of appearances,

and I am not ashamed to confess that I return your affection."

Dunbar, on hearing this flattering confession, forgot every thing but the happiness of being beloved, and for a few moments he could not articulate a word. At length he declared that he did believe her innocent, but that he hoped she would take compassion on his anxiety, and clear up the fatal mystery.

"That is *impossible*," she answered: "my secret must die with me, and I with that, if I am ever accused and tried for murder."

"Horrible!" exclaimed Dunbar, relinquishing the hand he held; but resuming it, he protested that would she be his wife, he would guard her even from the slightest breath of suspicion, and avert from her even the slightest apprehension of evil."

"It is impossible!" replied Editha in a mournful but determined tone. "Till now, believing that my fatal secret

was known to no one, and never would be known, to be yours was the fondest wish of my heart: I saw you rich in talents and in virtues, and I wished to be the honoured object of your choice; but now an eternal obstacle to our union has arisen. Never, while there exists a being who is likely to drag me from a husband's arms to prison as a murderess, will I be your wife, or the wife of any man; and I would sooner die than violate what I know and feel to be a virtuous resolution."

Dunbar listened to her with anguish, but with even increased admiration, and he vainly attempted to alter her decision. He offered to go in search of Apreece, and, having tried to convince him of Editha's innocence, persuade him to bind himself by oath never to reveal what he had seen. But then he recollected his extreme obstinacy; and he thought it much safer to run the chance of his never meet-

ing Editha, than, by informing him who she was and where she was, put it in his power to deliver her up to what he imagined to be justice.

By the time this conversation had taken place, Editha and Dunbar were arrived at madame Altieri's door; and more wretched than any words can express, they bade each other good night, and retired to bed, —but not to sleep, for that the misery of both forbade. Yet amongst the sorrow which they felt, one dear conviction, one soothing idea, threw a ray of comfort across the gloom. Editha knew that she was beloved, and that her lover's attachment had risen superior even to well-grounded suspicions of her being atrociously guilty; and Dunbar felt assured that it was not the indifference but the virtue of Editha that opposed his happiness, and that in denying him her hand she felt as much sorrow as he did in hearing the denial.

The next day they met, but it was in

company, and madame Altieri took an opportunity of declaring that business obliged her to return immediately to Rouen. At this intelligence, and at the name of Rouen, Dunbar and Editha looked mournfully at each other; and the former, when he had an opportunity, approached the latter, and said that if she went to Rouen, he begged to be permitted to accompany her, as the fears which he had for her safety made it impossible for him to be in the slightest degree easy, while absent from her with the consciousness that she was on the spot where she had incurred such personal danger.

"On condition," replied Editha, "that you go not as my *lover*, but as my friend, and that you do not unsettle my mind by urging a suit which I am resolved to deny, I accede to your request."

"Cruel conditions! but I will yield to any terms rather than not accompany you." He then made known his wishes

to madame Altieri, and she coldly consented that he should be of their party to Rouen.

That evening, when Dunbar returned from making preparations for the voyage which was shortly to take place, he overheard the ladies in high debate, and saw by her countenance that Editha was unusually agitated.

"I am glad you are come, sir Malcolm," cried madame Altieri, "for I hope you will be of my opinion; and as you have some influence with miss Arundel, you may probably convert her. She has been maintaining most violently, that a person may commit murder, and yet be very amiable, and very tender-hearted: now what do you think on this subject, sir?"

It is impossible to describe the pain and embarrassment which this speech occasioned Dunbar; and when he looked at Editha, there seemed such a guilty consci-

ousness in her downcast eye and flushed cheek, that, spite of his confidence in her innocence, he could not help believing that, in the strange opinion which she had been delivering, she had been excusing and describing herself.

"You do not answer, sir Malcolm," cried Mrs. Malden, "but appear quite confounded at madame Altieri's question."

"I feel myself quite unable to answer it, indeed," replied Dunbar, "nor do I wish to decide between two ladies whose judgments are both so entitled to deference and respect from me." Then complaining of a violent headach, he begged leave to walk in the garden for a few minutes, and suddenly retired. When he returned, after having endeavoured to subdue the painful impressions which what had just passed had left on his mind, he saw on miss Arundel's countenance an expression of fixed dejection which wounded him to the soul. He even

thought that she looked reproachfully at him. Nor was he mistaken: Editha found means of saying to him soon after—"I see very clearly what has passed, and is still passing in your mind relative to the late conversation; and still you wished me to marry you! Alas! when I must ever be at times the object of suspicion to you, think you that I would ever venture to be your wife?"

Dunbar was shocked and affected by these words, and by the mournful expression of her countenance as she uttered them; and seizing her hand, he promised her that he would never suspect her again.

"Impossible!" she answered, and rejoined the company.

That evening madame Altieri, when alone with her daughter, whose towering superiority of mind and character she had always beheld with envy, observed to

Editha, that she did not expect that a young woman of her extreme correctness and propriety would have encouraged a gentleman to accompany her on a voyage to France, whose attentions to her had been too marked to be misunderstood, unless an explanation had taken place, and that he was a declared and accepted lover.

"An explanation has taken place," replied Editha, clasping her hands in agony as she spoke.

"Well!—and is he—is this heretic to be your husband? for your father left you so independent of me, and gave you so fine a fortune, miss Arundel, that I do not expect to be consulted by you on the occasion, though I can never approve your union with a heretic."

"My dear dear mother," cried Editha, "do you suppose that I can ever forget that you are my mother, and have a right

to know every thing before I decide on it? Has my conduct been so very undutiful, that you are not convinced that my love and duty keep me dependent on you, though my fortune makes me otherwise?"

"No—I cannot say I have had much reason to complain of you," ungraciously replied her mother. "But are you to marry sir Malcolm?"

"No, madam: not that his religion would have been an obstacle to our union; —my father taught me to respect the religious opinions of every one, provided such opinions were sincere; and I should have had no doubt of finding, on this subject, sir Malcolm Dunbar as liberal as myself."

"Your father," replied the bigoted madame Altieri, "was more than half a heretic himself: but I suppose you would think it your duty to try and convert your heretic husband?"

"No otherwise, madam, than by taking care to let my practice be such as to pre-

possess him in favour of the belief which had occasioned it."

"Say no more, say no more," cried madame Altieri haughtily. "On this subject I cannot bear to hear you talk. So then, you are not to marry this man?"

"No, madam, I will never marry him or any other man," she answered, bursting into tears.

"And does he know, and is he convinced of this?"

"He is."

"Then why does he go to Rouen with us?"

"It is his pleasure so to do, as he never saw the city, being under strict confinement all the time that he was in it."

"I fear, miss Arundel," said madame Altieri, "that you have not yet forgotten the poor murdered baron."

"Forgotten him!" exclaimed Editha, shuddering as she spoke:—"no, madam, believe me, I shall never be so happy as to

forget him."—Then, rushing into her own apartment, she gave way to all her miserable feelings.

The next morning madame Altieri told Mrs. Malden how distressed she was to see that time had not at all obliterated from her daughter's mind the image of the German baron, who was supposed to have been murdered at Rouen by his servant;—that he had paid miss Arundel most particular attention for some time, but had suddenly neglected her, just as it was supposed that he had made an impression on her heart: but, as if his inconstancy had only rooted his image more deeply, she added that she was convinced her daughter would live single for his sake.

This conversation Mrs. Malden repeated to Dunbar, and while he heard it, a feeling like that of death oppressed him;—he forgot that he had promised never to suspect Editha again, and he beheld

the baron perishing at her feet, stabbed by her in a paroxysm of revengeful jealousy. But the next day, when all was ready for their voyage, his suspicions vanished; and nought but love triumphant, he handed Editha into the boat, contented to be with her and to behold her, and set sail for Dieppe. The next day they were on their road to Rouen.

"There! that was your prison!" said Editha to Dunbar as they entered Rouen; and as she said this, she grasped his hand almost convulsively, and neither of them spoke till they reached madame Altieri's house.

Dunbar, having handed them out, went in search of lodgings for himself in their neighbourhood. He soon procured apartments; and having entered a public room to take some refreshment, he heard a gentleman say that the footman who was supposed to have murdered his master, a German baron, was taken up in Holland;

and was then in prison at Rouen; that he had been examined; but that, though he confessed having gone off with all his master's effects, there seemed no proof of his having murdered him; and that he declared himself to be as ignorant of his fate as any one else was. Dunbar listened to this conversation with the most horrible fears. It seemed as if Editha had returned to Rouen at this critical moment, on purpose to be given up to the mercy of the law, whether justly or unjustly; for he had no doubt but that the German baron, Editha's former lover, was the man murdered in the field; and he did not know but some facts might come out on the trial which might tend to criminate her.

The next day he went to Editha's house, on purpose to try to see her alone, and tell her what he had overheard: but he found her in company, and he started and turned pale when he saw that she was

going out dressed in her French hat and shawl!

"I meant never to wear this dress again," said Editha, coming up and blushing, "as I know that for many reasons it displeases you: but we are going to spend the day with an old lady, a dear friend of mine; and as she gave me this unfortunate dress, she will be pleased to see that I wear it still: therefore I have put it on, though very much against my feelings, believe me.—Farewell! Meet us this evening on the public walk." So saying, she gave her hand to a gentleman present, and stepping into a carriage drove off immediately.

"Oh! how long will the hours seem till I see thee again!" thought Dunbar.

When evening came he eagerly and impatiently repaired to the public walk; where after waiting some time, he saw Editha enter the promenade, madame Al-

tieri leaning on her arm, and he hastily set off to meet them. But he found himself seized by some one, and looking round he beheld Apreece and another gentleman! This dreadful rencontre deprived Dunbar of all presence of mind, and he stood silent and motionless, looking the picture of consternation.

"By St. David!" exclaimed Apreece, "it is very strange that the sight of me always makes you ill, Dunbar!—On my soul, I believe you are going to faint again!—Danvers!" said Apreece (who had been drinking freely) to his friend, "who would think that this pale-faced shaking fellow as he is now, should be one of the bravest officers in the service, and should face a cannon with the boldest?—Why, Dunbar, recover yourself, man;—what the deuce ails thee?" But he spoke in vain. Editha was near at hand, and to prevent Apreece from seeing her was impossible.

" Heavens! what a beautiful creature!" cried Apreece's friend at this moment, turning, and beholding miss Arundel. Apreece followed the direction of his friend's eyes; when, as soon as he saw Editha, he rushed towards her, exclaiming—" It is she!—by heaven, it is she herself!—It is the murderess of the nunnery field!"

Dunbar heard no more, for he fell senseless on the ground;—while Editha, aware who Apreece must be, for she had seen the distress depicted in Dunbar's face as she approached, crossed her hands meekly on her breast, and neither spoke nor moved.

" Who is this madman?" cried madame Altieri: " take him away directly." But Apreece, piqued at the epithet madman, told her he was in his perfect senses, and that before any tribunal in the world he would arraign the young lady as a murderess.

By this time a crowd had collected; and a gentleman stepping forward told Apreece that he must be mistaken in the person, for that the lady was miss Arundel, a lady of the most exemplary character.

"Arundel! mademoiselle Arundel!" cried a woman coming forward; "that is the name of the lady whom the poor baron went by appointment to meet the night he disappeared, and was no doubt murdered, though not by my husband."

"Why, who are you?" cried another gentleman.

"I am the wife of Gerandi, who is now in custody on suspicion of having murdered baron Holstein, his master;—and he has found to-day a note from a mademoiselle Arundel, begging the baron to meet her at dawn in the nunnery field,—and he will produce it on his trial."

On hearing this, Apreece exclaimed, that what the woman said completely sub-

stantiated the charge; and madame Altieri, finding that Editha said not a word to repel the charge against her, threw her daughter's arm from her with a sort of frantic violence, and was carried in a swoon from the promenade into the nearest *restaurateur's*. An officer of justice at this moment approached Editha, and said that he was under the painful necessity of taking her into custody, and carrying her before a magistrate, that a commitment on the evidence of the gentleman might be made out, and she be conveyed to prison.

"Thy will be done!" cried Editha, lifting her meek eyes to heaven and giving her hand to the officer. Yet when she passed Dunbar, who still insensible was lying on a bench on which they had laid him, "Poor, dear Dunbar!" she exclaimed; then pressing his cold hand fondly between both hers, she sighed deeply, and followed whither she was led. Apreece,

though with evident reluctance, now made his deposition*, and Editha was conveyed to prison.

Dunbar, soon after she departed, was carried into the same house to which they had removed madame Altieri; and when he recovered his senses, and heard what had passed during his swoon, and that the wretched mother of Editha was in the next room, he desired to be led into her apartment, that he might endeavour to speak comfort to her. But he found her in a tempest of passion, and so unwilling to believe Editha innocent, that Dunbar found it vain to argue with her; and unable to bear the opprobrious epithets which this cruel mother bestowed on her unhappy daughter, he took his leave of her abruptly, and went to gain, if possible, admission to the prisoner. But that he soon found was impossible; and he was return-

*I have used the terms of English law-proceedings, in order to be better understood, and to simplify my story as much as possible.

ing to his lodgings in a state of the most terrible dejection, when he met Apreece and Mr. Danvers going in search of him. The sight of Apreece roused him from his despondency; and seizing him roughly by the arm, he wildly exclaimed, that he should answer to him with his life for the life of miss Arundel.

"You may say what you please, and do what you please to me," replied Apreece mournfully, "and I shall not resent it. I am as sorry for what I have done as you can be; for, oh, had you seen her and heard her as I did!"

"Seen and heard whom?"

"Why, this dear unfortunate miss Arundel. When I had made my deposition, and they led her away to prison, she turned to me, and said with the voice and look of a saint, I thought, 'Sir, I forgive you; you have probably been the means of my death, but you have only done your duty in giving up

up a supposed murderess to justice; and let the award of your conscience support you under the compunction which you may one day feel for what you have done, as my conscience now supports me under the expectation of the sufferings which await me.' By St. David I thought I should have fainted! Not a word could I speak, but at that moment I could have laid down my life to prove her innocence, though I am pledged in a few days to prove her, as far as in me lies, guilty of murder."

"Then now you believe her innocent, do you?" eagerly interrupted Dunbar.

"Why really I—I—I don't exactly know what to believe;—but this I know, that I wish from the bottom of my soul I was not her accuser. I do not wish to afflict you, Dunbar, more than I have already done; and God knows, that is more than is pleasant to me; but you are partly to blame in this."

"*I* to blame?" cried Dunbar.

"Yes, you.—I have long been convinced that you took pains to deceive me, and make me believe myself delirious when you knew that I was in my senses, in order to save miss Arundel from danger; and you may suppose, that when on reflection I was convinced this had been the case, I felt piqued and hurt, and felt my love of justice, and my hatred of the crime of murder, made still more acute by a sense of personal injury: whereas, if you had been ingenuous with me, and had said, 'I believe you, Apreece, you could not imagine this: but, my dear fellow, my life is bound up in hers; I love her so madly, that by exposing her life you will probably destroy mine;' why then, though I should have thought you a great fool, I should have weighed the importance of your life and peace against the life of the man murdered, and the latter would, no doubt, have kicked the beam;

and my conscience would have been satisfied to have let miss Arundel live unaccused. I will tell you another thing, too:—Your servant told mine at Brighton, it seems, that he believed your illness was all a sham, to get me off the Steine, and prevent me from seeing a miss Arundel, who was with you; for that he had overheard you one day say to yourself, "If I can but prevent Apreece's seeing her, should he come in her way, all will be safe." So I found I had been your dupe a second time; and though I could not imagine who miss Arundel was, and why I was not to see her, I felt that you had not used me well."

"Say no more," cried Dunbar, "unless you have a mind to drive me frantic. I see and feel the justice of what you say. Never yet did disingenuousness and artifice succeed, nor should they succeed. Oh, had I told the truth, had I thrown myself on your generosity and your humanity, I now feel that this dreadful

moment would have been spared us; nay, you, like me, would have distrusted the evidence of your senses, and believed your wretched victim to be innocent."

"My victim! my victim! Call her not so, Dunbar; for by Heaven I cannot bear it!" replied Apreece, rushing out of the house; and Dunbar, more miserable still, returned to his lodgings.

I will not dwell on the misery of Dunbar, the restless compunction of Apreece, and the angry emotions of madame Altieri, during the three succeeding days, the days which preceded the trial of Gerandi and Editha, nor the calm and dignified resignation with which the latter supported herself under her calamity, but will proceed to the day of trial.

Gerandi was put to the bar first, on the charge of having murdered and then robbed his master, the baron Holstein. To the robbery he pleaded Guilty; and his counsel said that he confessed, that finding his

master had disappeared, either because he was dead, or because he had committed some crime, and seeing that no inquiry was instituted concerning him, he had been tempted to go off with his money and valuables; that it had never occurred to him that he was likely to be suspected of having murdered the baron,—he had therefore neglected to collect proofs of his innocence; but he declared that he had now in his possession a note which he had lately found, and could produce, which would, by criminating the lady in custody, clear him of the charge of the murder. The note was produced, and read in court; it was in French, as follows:

"I have something of importance to propose to you, dear baron, but I *now* rarely see you, and *never alone*; there is, however, a method of seeing you without danger of interruption:—You know the street ——, there is a gate in it which leads

into the field behind the convent of the White Nuns. I enclose you the key of that gate, and an hour before dawn to morrow, (Thursday, the fourth of August,) there I will expect you. Be punctual, and be secret.

"EDITHA ARUNDEL."

Two or three witnesses were then brought, who swore positively, though very reluctantly, that the note was in the hand-writing of miss Arundel. Witnesses were next called to prove that the baron to their certain knowledge went out alone an hour before dawn, on the very day of the week and month mentioned in the note, and was never seen or heard of after. They also swore that Gerandi had sat up for his master, and had never left the house till the middle of the next day; when, being alarmed for his safety, he had gone in search of him. He was acquitted therefore of the charge of murder, —and pardoned the robbery, on condition that he should make good his assurances

of being able to bring forward certain proofs to fix the crime of the murder on Editha Arundel.

Editha was then summoned to the bar. She entered, leaning on the arm of Dunbar, who had resolved to conquer his feelings so far as to enable him to support by his presence the courage of the prisoner. Apreece was first sworn,—and in a faltering hurried manner he described what he had seen, and the dress as well as conduct of Editha. The dress was immediately produced in court; and Apreece swore positively that at the time he saw her by the side of the body, she wore that hat and shawl,—both too remarkable not to be observed by him and known again wherever he saw them.

"But you did not see the prisoner stab the gentleman?" said the judge.

"Oh, no, my lord—and perhaps she never did stab him," he eagerly answered.

"That remains to be proved," he replied; and a horrible evidence of the truth of Apreece's relation was now announced to be in the next chamber. The piece of water in the field had been dragged, and the dead body and the dagger found. The body had been recognised to be that of the baron, and it was now positively sworn to by Gerandî and others, who went out of court for the purpose; while Editha, overcome by dreadful recollections, fainted away in Dunbar's arms.

When the body was removed again, the note signed "Editha Arundel" was handed to Editha as soon as she recovered; and she said the hand resembled her own so much that she should not have known the difference, but called God to witness that she never wrote the note. Gerandi then produced a pocket-book belonging to his master, in which were

several notes evidently in the same handwriting, though written in a hurried manner, and signed E. A. They were very short, and in English, and most of them contained expressions of jealous fondness, complaints of being forsaken, and vows of revenge. But one, which, unlike the others, had not been sent in an *enveloppe*, but was directed on the outside to the Baron Holstein, and written in French, contained this expression: "Faithless wretch! is then thy once dear Editha already forsaken and forgotten? Well then—thy blood shall expiate the offence; and when we next meet, beware of the just vengeance of E. A.!"

"Dreadful!" exclaimed Editha when she heard this note read, "how proof accumulates on proof!" Every eye in court was turned on her when she said this, with an expression of pity. Another witness was then called, and at sight of her Editha started with surprise.

"Giuseppa!" cried she, "and art thou come hither to witness aught against me?"

The girl turned pale, but was very firm and collected while making her deposition; which was, That when she lived with Editha at Rouen as her waiting-maid, she observed her mistress, on, she believed, the 3d of last August, receive and open a note; that in reading it she seemed a good deal agitated, and having torn it in two, she threw it on a dish of charcoal which stood near her; and then, evidently wrapt in perturbed thought, went into her own apartment, where she heard her walking as if disturbed in mind; that curiosity prompted her to snatch the pieces of the note from the fire, and she had kept them ever since, from an idea that there was a mystery belonging to the affair, which they might one day help to clear up; but that that very evening, miss Arundel having discharged her unjustly,

she had accompanied a cousin of hers into Italy, and was but lately returned to Rouen; where she had learnt, as soon as she arrived, that Gerandi was in custody for the murder of the baron, and had therefore in justice to him resolved to produce the note, before she heard that miss Arundel was in custody also. The pieces of the note being joined, it was read with great ease, as follows:— (It was in French, directed to miss Arundel.)

"Your flattering and condescending summons, beautiful Editha, fills me with gratitude and rapture. Yes—I will not fail to meet you to-morrow at an hour before dawn in the nunnery field, according to your desire; and oh, how long will the hours seem to me till then!

"Your most devoted admirer,

3d of August. "ERNEST HOLSTEIN."

This note completed the strong cir-

cumstantial evidence against the unhappy Editha, who felt that her fate was now certain, and, when called upon for her defence, only said that she had no means of making any; while Apreece, aware of what was likely to follow, turned very faint, and was obliged to leave the court; and at the repeated request of Editha, Dunbar at length did the same.

The judge then summed up the evidence; and declaring that it appeared to him certain that miss Arundel through jealousy had stabbed the baron, (having written the note in order to decoy him to the nunnery field,) he pronounced judgment of death upon her.

Editha bore her sentence with the utmost firmness; and, when the judge had ended, said, if any indulgence could be shown to her, she begged it might be by an order for immediate execution; and the judge ordered that it should take

place in four days time. Editha then bowed to the court, and, followed by the pity and even admiration of all present, was conveyed back to her prison.

I should vainly attempt to describe the feelings of Dunbar, or even of Apreece, when Editha's fate was at last determined. But my readers will not be surprised to hear, that the sight of Apreece was so horrible to Dunbar, that he positively refused to see him; nor indeed would he have seen any one, but given himself up to solitude and despondence, had not the wish of doing what might give some pleasure to Editha led him to request an interview of her mother, in hopes of prevailing on her to forgo the cruel anger towards Editha which she had as yet most unnaturally maintained. He was not sure of being admitted into her presence: but, contrary to his expectations, he was admitted immediately; when, instead of being able to utter a word either of condolence

or entreaty, all his fortitude forsook him, and he sunk on a chair and groaned aloud in agony.

"Sir Malcolm," cried madame Altieri, "this sorrow does but too much honour to the unworthy miss Arundel—for daughter I will not call her."

"Unworthy!" exclaimed Dunbar, roused by indignation from the stupor of grief, "and do you then believe her guilty?"

"I do—much as it hurts me to believe her so; for is not the evidence against her dreadfully strong and conclusive?"

"It is indeed, madam: but I have known circumstantial evidence as strong against an accused person several times, and yet the innocence of the condemned has afterwards been made manifest to the world: and against the evidence that proves miss Arundel's guilt, I set her character from childhood; the mastery over her feelings which every one

who has known her from her infancy declares her to have possessed; and that angelic sweetness, that active virtue, that humble but assured piety, which break forth in her discourse, her countenance, and her conduct on all occasions, and make me consider her not only as unjustly condemned for a fault which she has seemed to commit, but as a generous martyr devoting herself, for some noble reason unknown to us, to pay the forfeit of another's crime!"

A thousand varying emotions now by turns crimsoned over and blanched the cheek of madame Altieri, while Dunbar was speaking. That daughter, who most unconsciously had caused her, during her whole life, to suffer under a sense of inferiority, which her ambition and high pretensions made insupportable to her, she had now seen humbled and degraded, by being accused and convicted of a dreadful crime; and, agonized as she was at

the thought that a child of hers would perish on the scaffold, her self-love was soothed by the injury done to that spotless fame, that high respect, which had ever been the object of her envy. It is a well-known fact, that the envy and rivalship of near relations is the most bitter and inveterate; and when a mother is so unnatural as not to consider a child with love, but jealousy, her jealousy is the more violent in proportion as the tie is the closer.

"You are a generous judge," replied madame Altieri haughtily; "but you are a lover too,—and love blinds you, I fear, on this occasion: guilty or not guilty, however, I would at any rate save miss Arundel's life, if possible. True, I never doted on her so fondly as I do on Altieri; still she is my child: therefore, if money or interest can find means to secure her escape from justice, whatever you do, sir Malcolm, I will go hand-in-hand with you."

"I have already formed a plan," re-

plied Dunbar,—" and God grant it may succeed! But in the mean while suffer me to conduct you to the prison."

" Never!" returned madame Altieri. " Never!—never will I again behold the daughter who has disgraced me! Guilty or not guilty, her conduct must have been such as no mother can approve, or she could not have been involved in circumstances so suspicious:—therefore, we have parted never to meet more!"

Dunbar listened to these unmaternal sentiments with horror and disgust; and unable to bear the sight of madame Altieri any longer, he bowed in silence, and, casting a look of contemptuous indignation on her, hastily withdrew. He immediately repaired to the prison, and was after some hesitation admitted to the prisoner. He found Apreece with her crying like a child, and begging for God's sake that she would consent to escape, if means for her escape could be contrived; but to

this proposal Editha returned a firm denial.

"Have you seen my mother?" cried Editha, as soon as she perceived Dunbar.

"I have."

"And will she see me?"

"No."

"Not see me?—Is not the bitterness of resentment past?"

"No:—but think not of her; she is unworthy such a child as you."

"Does she then believe me guilty?"

"I fear she does—spite of all I urged."

"But *you* then," said Editha eagerly, "believe me innocent?"

"I do—from the bottom of my soul: and so do all who ever knew or heard of you here," cried Apreece, "if I may judge from the lamentation and indignation which is expressed by all the poor, and most of the rich, in this city and the neighbourhood: and I should be sorry to have to pay for all the masses and offerings, for

the sake of your soul, now said and offered in every church in the city."

Editha, for the first time, lost her calmness—she was affected.—The consciousness of being beloved, and of being acquitted of the crime imputed to her, by the hearts of those who knew her, caused a throb of pleasure in her bosom, which was cruelly checked when she thought of her mother.

"Kind, generous friends!" said she, extending a hand to Apreece and Dunbar at the same time.

"Gracious Heaven!" cried Apreece, sobbing; "and she calls me a kind and generous friend!"

"Would to God you would leave us!" said Dunbar, "I cannot bear the sight of you."

"No wonder," replied Apreece mournfully, and preparing to go.

"Stay!" cried Editha. "Dunbar, for my sake you must conquer this feeling to-

wards your friend, and learn to forgive him as I do. If you see me, you must see him; for, believe me, I mean to employ him to execute most of the little offices which I wish to be performed after I am no more."

"Employ him in preference to me!"

"Yes;—for I look forward. Dunbar, I believe the time will come, and that you will both live to see it, when my innocence will be made only too evident."

"*I* shall not live to see it," said Dunbar; "I shall not long survive you."

Editha paused for a minute, for the tone of misery in which he spoke pierced her to the heart; but she continued thus:

"Yes:—perhaps the time will come when my innocence will be acknowledged; and then think what a consolation it will be to the already self-condemned Apreece, to know that I died in charity with him; that I employed him as a

friend; that I liked to have him near me; that I approved the motives which led him to apprehend me; and that I died forgiving him and praying for him!"

"And you think this will console me! —No, no,—spurn me, spit on me, revile me, curse me, do any thing, sweet soul, but bless and pray for me!" cried Apreece falling at her feet, overcome with excess of emotion.

Even Dunbar felt for him; and raising him from the ground, he whispered him that perhaps it was not impossible to effect an escape: and that idea recovering Apreece immediately, they both took leave of Editha; but she detained them to send a message by them to her mother. It was such an one as was calculated to move any heart not steeled by bad passions against the admission of the softer ones. But Editha herself feared that it would have no effect; and clasping her hands together, she exclaimed—"No, no!

I fear that she will neither see nor forgive me;—and yet how truly I have deserved her love! Oh my mother! cruel but still dear mother! how miserable will your feelings be, when you shall know, as I doubt not you will one day know, how fondly I considered your peace, and how truly as a child I loved you!"

Here emotion choked her voice; and Dunbar and Apreece, greatly affected also, withdrew to contrive means of saving her if possible; and Apreece vowed that if she refused to escape, he should make no scruple of gagging her, and carrying her off in spite of herself. But gratitude and affection were already at work to save her. —Editha had a fine estate about twenty miles from Rouen, which was left her by her father, and was one cause of her mother's hatred of her father's memory, and coldness towards herself. This estate was full of vassals; but Editha treated them always as fellow beings, not as

slaves; and the poor peasants around her looked on her as something more than mortal,—while an old servant of her father's, who acted as her steward, beheld in her the true and worthy representative of his revered master. Judge then what a sensation of agony must have been excited throughout her estate, when the news of her condemnation reached it! One feeling of indignation animated every man, every woman, and every child. Their adored miss Arundel guilty of murder! Impossible! though a thousand judges had said it; and they resolved to rescue her or die.

But the old servant Jacques, as soon as the first burst of feeling had subsided, resolved to effect the same purpose by stratagem, in preference to force; and having, to gratify the affections of the vassals, levied a small contribution on each of them, to go, as he said, towards making a fund to bribe the jailor, he set off

for Rouen; and he offered a sum so vast to the keeper of the prison, and concerted his measures so skilfully, that on the eve of the day appointed for the execution every thing was ready for miss Arundel's escape. The White Nuns themselves, being convinced of Editha's innocence, joyfully consented to assist him; and for this purpose they gave out that they felt horror of her crime, and were ashamed of having had the care of her education; and Jacques, on pretence of coming on a message from madame Altieri, was admitted to see Editha,—though, on account of Apreece's having talked too freely, his visits and those of Dunbar were now positively forbidden; and the latter, fearing he should see Editha no more, had taken to his bed, in the firm hope and persuasion that he should never rise from it again.

When Jacques saw Editha, he was too much overcome to speak; nor was she

much less affected;—but at length she asked him if he brought her any message from her mother.

"Yes:—she desires you to send her my young master's present address, as she wants to write to him."

"And is that all?" cried Editha, changing colour.

"Yes:—except that she desires you will consent to escape;—and, thank God! we have the means in our power!"

"Tell my mother," replied Editha, "that I shall write to Altieri myself:—I best can break the melancholy news to him; and unless he hears it first as I shall relate it, I shudder to think of what the consequences may be.—Poor fellow!—how I feel for his agonies!"

Here she paused, overcome almost to fainting with the violence of her emotions.

"But, dear dear lady," cried Jacques, "you need have nothing but good news to

tell him; for you can be saved!—indeed you can!"

"How?" replied Editha, starting; the love of life at that moment being paramount to every other consideration.

Jacques then told her that he had bribed one of the jailors, and had no doubt of bribing the other, as he was a very devout man, and the lady abbess of the White Nuns had sent him a relic from the shrine of the Lady of Loretto;—that, if he did not consent, means would be taken to get him out of the way, while the other jailor conveyed her at two o'clock that morning to an apartment overlooking the river;—that from the window of that apartment she should jump into the arms of some of her peasants and himself, who would be in a boat ready to receive her;—that then the boat should row till it came below the nunnery wall, where a ladder of ropes would be hanging down,

by which she was to ascend into the nunnery garden, and thence be taken and concealed in the vaults till all search was over. The plan was a promising one, and Editha's resolution began to give way. But, after a long and serious communion with her own thoughts, she felt that she had done nothing, if she did not determine to do all;—she felt that her sacrifice must be complete, or it would be of no avail;—she shuddered whilst picturing to herself the events that might happen if she consented to live, therefore heroically resolved to die; and having made known her resolution to the faithful Jacques, the violence of his sorrow added one more to the pangs which she already felt:—but her firmness continued unshaken.

"O God!" cried the old man; "to think that you, though not guilty, should pay the forfeit of guilt!"

"Would you rather that I should die guilty than innocent?"

"Oh, no, no, no. I have now the consolation of knowing that you are going from a bad world,—a world unworthy of you, to your dear father, my honoured master, and the joys of heaven! But I feel for myself and your poor vassals—What is to become of them?"

"I shall leave them," answered Editha, "to the care and love of my brother, and well do I know for my sake how fondly Altieri will cherish them."

Here she burst into tears, and begged that Jacques would leave her, as what yet remained of her time she wished to spend with her confessor in prayer. Jacques then forced himself away, and Editha remained to meditate and to pray.

In what agonies did all who loved Editha, and they were nearly all who knew her, pass that night!—but she composed her mind by the aid of religion. In the morning she sat down to write to her brother; and wishing for private reasons

that her mother might not know his address, she desired the jailor to take care that, as soon as she was executed, the letter should be sent to the post without going through any other hand. She then wrote a few lines to Dunbar, due, as she justly thought, to his well-tried affection, and his generous confidence in her innocence, even in spite of appearances. But this letter was not to be given to him till all was over, and she wrote to that effect on the outside; and having given it to the jailor, she finally prepared for death, and the dreadful moment arrived!!!

Dunbar, meanwhile, passed the long hours in unspeakable wretchedness:—at length he heard the bell toll—the doleful signal of what was about to happen; and a few moments after, while he lay nearly insensible in his bed, the letter from Editha, sad proof that all was over, was brought him by his servant. He could not read it; but consciousness for-

sook him, and he fell back like a corpse upon his pillow.

But to return to Editha.—As she passed to execution, her heart was melted, yet gratified, to see amidst the crowds that awaited her on her passage, the poor and the afflicted whom she had relieved and comforted, with clamorous sorrow and uplifted hands imploring her to look at them once more, and bless them before she died; then falling on their knees, invoking Heaven to support her under her trials, and receive her to its mercy.

"My daughter, thou hast not lived in vain," said her confessor, wiping his eyes: "these will be blessed witnesses for thee before the throne of thy Creator."

At length they reached the fatal spot, and Editha with a firm step mounted the scaffold. So strongly was the idea of a rescue believed, that a guard of soldiers surrounded the scaffold; and there was

scarcely any doubt, but that for that precaution, a little army of the indigent, urged by gratitude, aided by many of the rich led on by love, joined by Apreece and Danvers, would have attempted a rescue, and perhaps succeeded in that attempt. But the precautions of the magistrates were too well taken; and a relation of the baron Holstein's being then at Rouen, he was as eager that Editha should die, as others that she should live, and he took measures accordingly. Every thing was ready, and the work of death beginning, (for Editha was bending her neck to the hand of the executioner, and all was solemn dread and expectation,) when a bustle was heard in the crowd, and it opened to make room for a man, who, covered with dust, and with disordered mien and dishevelled hair, forced his way towards the scaffold, exclaiming, "Stop, stop, for mercy's sake! She is

innocent! she is innocent! and I, I am the murderer!"

At these words, the crowd, no longer to be controlled, burst through the guards and rushed upon the scaffold, following the stranger, who, rushing towards the nearly fainting Editha, exclaimed, "My Editha! my sister! and did you think I would let you die for me, die for my guilt!" Then pressing Editha to his bosom, they fainted in each other's arms. Altieri recovered first. "Horrible!" cried he, shuddering: "had I arrived only a moment later, all would have been over."

Editha now revived; and seeing Altieri, she said, "Oh, brother, what have you done! Of how much more consequence is your life than mine! and I had such consolations in dying!"

"But what would have consoled *me* for your death? Think you that I would have survived you?"

The officers of justice now interfered, and desired to know why the execution was delayed.

"Because my sister is innocent, and I guilty," fiercely replied Altieri. "I am the murderer of the baron Holstein, as I can prove, and my sister was ignorant of the deed, till in an evil hour she entered the field, saw what I had done, and prevailed on me to escape, while she threw the body into the water. However, I know that I must make all this appear in a court of justice, and thither I desire to be conducted."

The calmness with which Editha had borne her own fate was now entirely vanished, while contemplating the certain fate of her brother, and the agony which awaited her mother: nor could she see any joy in life restored to her on such terms, or feel one throb of pleasure, except when the dear image of Dunbar stole across her recollection; and then,

"How happy he will be!" was almost on her tongue, for the feeling throbbed powerfully at her heart. But, O the joy of the weeping wretches who had followed her with their tears and their blessings; and who now accompanied her on her return to prison with shouts and acclamations!

"They forget that my brother must die, still!" exclaimed Editha, wringing her hands as every shout met her ears.

"I am contented," said Altieri mournfully, "that they should only remember that *you live.*"

As the procession returned from the place of execution, the shouts reached the ears of Apreece, and with a foreboding of good news he ran out to know what had happened: and when he heard, "*Mademoiselle Arundel est sauvée, elle est innocente!*" pronounced by several persons to whom Editha was justly dear, the procession, which he had till now avoided, he

eagerly sought, and met it as it came near the prison. Editha was leaning on her brother's shoulder, all joy for herself lost in sorrow for him.

"Oh, 'tis true then! There she is, her own dear self!" cried Apreece, bursting into tears.

Editha heard an exclamation in English, and, suspecting who it might be, looked up; and as her eye met Apreece's, again the idea of Dunbar and his happiness came across her mind, and she smiled through her tears; when Apreece, as if reading her thoughts, got very near her, and exclaimed, while tears trickled down his cheeks, "I'll tell him! I'll tell him myself!" So saying, he bustled through the crowd, and disappeared; nor did he stop till he reached Dunbar's lodgings. He found him thrown across his bed, but just recovered from his swoon, and lost to every thing but a sense of misery; but on seeing Apreece rush into his room, he

started up in a transport of rage, and exclaiming, "Monster, be gone, your sight is odious to me!" sunk back again upon the bed.

"There!" cried Apreece, scarcely hearing his exclamation, "there! I told you so, she is innocent! the real murderer is found, and miss Arundel will not die!" Then he danced about the room in frantic joy; while Dunbar, pale as a spectre, seized his arm, and begged for mercy's sake that he would explain himself, and not sport with his feelings.

He did begin his explanation, but could not go on with it. Joy overpowered Dunbar as grief had done, but it was only for a minute: he recovered almost immediately to a sense of happiness; he embraced Apreece, he cried, he laughed, all in a moment; and then taking him by the arm, he proceeded to the hall of justice, whither they found that the prisoners had both been conveyed.

I shall not attempt to describe Dunbar's feelings on beholding Editha again, and seeing her return, freed from the disgrace of dying on a scaffold, to live with greater reputation for well-tried virtue than ever; for just as they reached the hall, some one was reading aloud Editha's letter to her brother: it had been taken from the jailor by order of the judge, as it was thought likely to contain evidence of importance, and was as follows:

"Your last letter, my beloved brother, gave me great pleasure; it convinced me that you see the error of your ways, and that you are now virtuously and piously resolved to live only for your wife and children. Yes, my brother, you will indeed do well to avoid all that may curtail your valuable life; for, were you to die, what would become of your Adelina and her offspring! My mother, you know, partial as she is to you, would never see or receive them, because of the hatred

which she bore to Adelina's father; and my fortune, you know, must descend to my father's family. Besides, long life to you is precious on another account: Altieri, you have crimes to expiate by heartfelt repentance and acts of atonement. O my brother, I would not for worlds go through the misery of knowing that you were at this time about to be summoned to your dread account, before you had endeavoured to expiate your crimes by a series of active duties! Murder! the murder of the baron Holstein, so recently committed! Believe me, Altieri, that I could die myself with pleasure to save your life, that you may endeavour to atone for having in a moment of frantic rage taken the life of a fellow-creature; for death would be no evil to me,—I have neither husband nor child to lament my loss and require my care. My mother loves me not, and the only enjoyment which continued existence

holds out to me is the approbation of my own heart. But that, though pleasant to live with, is more pleasant to *die* with, Altieri; and till my brother can die with an approving conscience, oh, Father of mercies, deign to prolong his life, and I shall die contented!

"Art thou not now convinced, my brother, that it is your sacred duty to live, and, if it were necessary, let me die for you, secure as you must be, that I should go to receive the full reward of the little good I have been able to do in my generation; and that you, on the contrary, would be summoned to receive the punishment of serious crimes, my brother? But no—I am so conscious of the generosity of your nature, and of your tenderness for me, that, were you to know that your death would preserve me from dying, every selfish consideration would vanish, and you would purchase the salvation of my life with the immediate forfeit of your own.

Yes—well am I convinced that the welfare of your wife and family, and the happiness of your immortal soul, would be sacrificed by you in a moment to the generous impulse of affection for me! Blind and ill-judging, but dear and affectionate Altieri, I have been aware of this; therefore I have taken care that you should not know of my danger till all was surely over: and having done so, I venture, though with reluctance, as I anticipate your misery, to inform you that the fatal transaction in the nunnery field is known; that circumstances as strong as unexpected have fixed the crime of murder upon me; that I have been tried and condemned, and that long before you receive this letter I shall have been executed!

"Then mark and *grant* my dying prayer, Altieri; let me not have died in vain; proclaim not yourself in the phrensy of despair the murderer, when I can no longer profit by the discovery! Leave not

your wife a wretched widow; your children fatherless; your affectionate mother childless; Altieri, I *command* you not to do this, and surely I have earned a right to be obeyed. Oh, by all our past love, my brother, by all the pleasures which we two have shared, but above all, by the sacrifice which I now joyfully make for you, and by your hopes of pardon and happiness hereafter, keep secret your crime and my innocence, and repay me in the only way by which I can be repaid, namely, by making amends for the errors of your youth, by days to come rich in deeds of piety and virtue!

"Remember, Altieri, it is your sister's *dying prayer*, and shudder to incur the guilt of disobeying it.

"Yours, even in death, unalterably,

"EDITHA ARUNDEL."

When the letter was ended, a silence interrupted only by sighs and sobs, and at length a murmur of applause, spoke the

deep impression which this proof of Editha's exalted merit produced; and to that succeeded a sort of agony at the idea that this noble woman had been on the point of perishing the victim of her virtue. I leave my readers to imagine the equally strong, though different emotions which it excited in the bosoms of the brother and the lover. The latter did not, could not speak his feelings: but the former gave way to such a passionate expression of his grateful emotions, and uttered such pathétic but incoherent self-gratulations on his sister's escape, and the sense he had of her unrivalled goodness to him, that there was not a dry eye in court; and every one lamented that a youth of such warm affections and such keen susceptibility (not to mention his personal graces, which no doubt added to the interest that he excited,) should be doomed to suffer himself the death from which he had saved his sister. But he had committed the detesta-

ble crime of murder, and justice required that he should suffer for it. Accordingly he was desired to prepare for trial the next day, that he might be legally convicted; and when committed to prison, Editha was allowed to accompany him at her own earnest request. When there, she was also allowed to be left alone with him, till the confessor, for whom Altieri had sent, should arrive.

It would be painful to dwell on the misery felt and expressed by this affectionate brother and sister at a moment like this, and when the feelings of their hearts were no longer restrained by the presence of importunate witnesses. But when they were become more composed, Editha began to lament the agony which her mother would experience.

"Think not of her, feel not for her, my sister; she never felt for, she never considered you!" cried Altieri angrily.

"Do not say so, Altieri; remember, she dotes on you, and to you she has been a most kind and tender mother."

"Has she?" replied he with a sarcastic smile. "Too selfish to bear the pain of correcting me for a fault, though the correction would have been my salvation perhaps; too indolent to show her love for me otherwise than by blind and mischievous indulgence, she suffered all my wild passions to take root and flourish; and the consequence is, (here he shook the chains on his hands,) that I am *here*, and thus!"

Editha, shocked at these terrible words, and unable to interrupt him, could only weep in silence, and he continued thus:

"Do you remember, Editha, an old fable, in which a thief at the gallows bites off his mother's ear on pretence of kissing her, and gives as a reason for the atrocity, that she deserved it, for having, by her

blind indulgence to his first faults, encouraged him to commit the action for which he was going to suffer?"

"I *do* remember it; but do not, do not apply it, Altieri——"

"I must, Editha, for I have done so all my life; I never saw the fable nor the print without saying to myself, 'How like is that to me and my mother!' But then I little thought how *very strong* the likeness would become at last! Nay, Editha, fear not that I shall *complete* the likeness; no, no,—though culpable, she is my mother still, and sacred be her person to me, as her frailties would be were I talking to any one but you; though, when I think of her indifference towards you, my self-command entirely forsakes me. When, trembling for your fate, I ran to her house on my arrival, and asked for you, though in evident distress, she reviled you in the most opprobrious manner as a murderess, and said that you were then, she supposed,

approaching the scaffold! I screamed aloud, and said, as I rushed to the door, 'I am the real murderer of the baron Holstein, and I fly to save her.' "

"Well, Altieri!"

"*Well*, Editha!—No—she seized my arm, and would have *detained* me, would have preserved her *guilty* child, and let her innocent child perish!"

"Well, Altieri, well—it was only a proof of her violent affection for you, and should *endear* her to you."

"Merciful God!—what! endear herself to me by an action that tended to destroy you! Oh, Editha!" Here folding his sister to his bosom, he wept over her for some minutes; then he exclaimed, "Mark me, Editha: had you died, had I come too late to save you, I would have stabbed myself in her presence! an act of horror, but of justice."

"Altieri! my brother, my dear dear brother, banish these horrid thoughts, and

let us call forth milder feelings, though of equal woe.—How is Adelina? how are your children?"

"*Dead*; all dead. A fever swept them off; and I might have died too, had I not heard of your danger, and rushed hither to save you. Editha, how I mourned at losing my wife and children! But now—Yes—gracious Being!" cried Altieri, raising his hands and eyes to heaven, "thou hast kindly converted misery into blessing, and even my death now will be another proof of thy mercy. Oh, Editha, the only pang will be parting with you!"

"And with your mother, Altieri."

"Yes, yes—with my mother, as you say; I know she loves me, and I grieve that I am forced to afflict her so dreadfully."

At this moment madame Altieri was introduced; and rushing towards her son, she fainted in his arms. All Altieri's

coldness towards his mother vanished at this sight: he wept over her, he laid her head on his bosom, he laid his cheek on hers, and, calling her by every tender name, he conjured her to revive, and pronounce his pardon for all the misery which he had caused her. She did revive,—but it was to utter the ravings of agony, and to vow that she would never survive the loss of her darling son; for, if he died, life would lose all its charms for her. This speech restored Altieri to all his resentment against her.

"You seem to forget, madam, that you have a daughter," replied Altieri, fixing his fine dark eyes sternly upon her as he spoke, and she cast hers down again in confusion, "and *such* a daughter!" continued he; "a daughter, who, above every selfish consideration, and regardful only of your peace and my eternal welfare, nobly sacrificed her life in order to preserve mine! Yet you could believe

her guilty, and could revile her too! could even wish her to *die*, that I might live!"

"Altieri, forbear, I conjure you to forbear!" interrupted Editha: "add not, to what she already feels, the bitterness of being reproached by you, by the son whom she so fondly loves! Altieri, I am sure, if my mother loved me as she loves you, I would die, indeed I would, Altieri, rather than reproach her, or give her an uneasy moment."

"Do you hear her?" cried Altieri.

"I do," replied madame Altieri in a voice scarcely articulate; then suddenly rising, she threw herself on her knees before Editha, and, overcome by remorse and tenderer and softer feelings, conjured her to forgive all her unkindness past, and clasp her unfortunate and affectionate mother to her heart. In an instant she was in the arms of her daughter;

and Altieri, as he clasped them both to his bosom, declared that he should now die contented. But the thoughts of his fate, thus recalled to their minds, banished every feeling but that of agony and regret from the mother and the daughter, and it was a scene of wretchedness too great to be described; till the entrance of the confessor, a Franciscan from a neighbouring monastery, forced them to depart, and leave Altieri to unburthen his mind, and receive the consolations of religion. Altieri, having confessed himself, next sent for a notary to take down the narration of his guilt, and cause it to be distributed far and near, in order that all who had heard of Editha's guilt should hear of her entire innocence also; and this he thought they would sooner do by this method of proceeding, than if it were to be made manifest only by the event of the trial.

The substance of the narrative was as follows:—

"That at the age of eighteen he had fallen in love with a beautiful girl of fifteen, the daughter of an Italian nobleman, who had been the enemy of his father, and was hated by his mother; that despairing to gain her in marriage, he had endeavoured to seduce her, and had succeeded; but that the object of his affection had, in a fit of remorse, confessed her crime and its effects to his sister, and that Editha had persuaded him to brave all consequences, and marry her immediately: that he had done so; and that owing to the absence of his wife's father, they were able to conceal the marriage two years; that on his death Altieri avowed it, but that his mother could not be prevailed upon to see his wife, though she received him; that in order to avoid her repeated importunities by letter to allow his marriage to be dissolved,

as wanting in some trifling forms, he had left the neighbourhood of Florence about half a year before the murder was committed, and had come within a three-days journey of Rouen, keeping his residence a secret from his mother; that, tired of solitude, and finding his passion for Adelina on the wane, he had come to Rouen, and when there had fallen desperately in love with a beautiful Englishwoman who had been divorced from her husband, and was living in the city; that at first she had ardently returned his passion, but on forming an acquaintance with the baron Holstein, who at that time professed an honourable attachment to Editha, she had neglected him and given the greatest encouragement to the love which the baron avowed for her; that while smarting under the greatest torments of jealousy, on having discovered that this lady, Mrs. St. John, had given up to the baron his picture and his letters, the very

letters produced in court, signed E. A. as proofs of her indifference to him, he had in a drunken frolic offended the magistracy of the city so much that he was forbidden to stay in it, on pain of a very severe penalty and long imprisonment; but that in spite of danger he had remained concealed to watch the conduct of the lovers; that having watched in disguise by the house of Mrs. St. John, and having seen the baron enter it at all hours, his jealousy grew so great that he resolved to force him to fight; but that dreading being discovered by the police, and not liking to trust the secret of his being in Rouen to the baron, he had written to him in Editha's name, appointing a meeting at such an hour in the nunnery field, where he well knew they could not be seen or interrupted, adding that he needed not *send an answer.*

"It so happened, that with his usual thoughtless gaiety he had previously

stolen Editha's key of the nunnery field, and finding that it opened the gate into the street, he had taken the impression of it in wax, and had had another made like it, meaning to come in sometimes and surprise his sister and some novices her friends. But he now found it likely to assist the purposes of his jealousy and revenge; he therefore enclosed the key to the baron; and as Editha, who was near five years older than himself, had taught him to write, his hand-writing resembled hers so much, that even Editha herself could scarcely distinguish between them: hence it was that his letters, signed E. A. Enrico Altieri, had been taken for Editha's, as also the threatening letter to the baron, reproaching him for having forsaken Editha, and the note making the appointment. That the baron, though desired not to answer the note, was too officiously polite to obey the injunction, and had therefore sent the answer to

Editha, which had been produced in court, and which, when she received it, had overwhelmed her with surprise and fear; the latter sensation she experienced from the immediate conviction which she felt, that Altieri, whose rashness she well knew, was the secret mover in this strange affair. She therefore resolved to go to the nunnery field; and if Altieri by means unknown to her had obtained a key of the gate, and had appointed the baron to meet him for any wild and fatal purpose, she hoped to be the mediator between them, and to prevent the meditated evil. That unfortunately she had been summoned to a sick nun at the appointed hour, and had not been able to hasten to the field till a few minutes after the time, and had arrived only to witness the last struggle of the baron; who being lame in the sword-arm, and unable to fight, had taken advantage of his inability to be called on for satisfaction, to taunt Altieri

with the preference in Mrs. St. John's affections which he had gained over him; and having boasted to him that he was that very moment hastening to an appointment with her, Altieri, like a jealous Italian, worked up to madness by this information, had suddenly plucked a stiletto from his bosom and stabbed him to the heart.

"That Editha had conjured him to fly immediately,—while struck with horror and remorse he hung over the body of his victim; and at last for the sake of his wife and children he had consented to escape, and leave her to the melancholy task of concealing all proofs of the murder. That he had arrived unseen and unsuspected at his own house, and had flattered himself, as no one knew that he was in Rouen, and no one had witnessed the transaction, that both his sister and himself would escape even from suspicion. But that he had been fatally deceived in

his expectations; for that, while weeping by the remains of his wife and children, he had heard that his sister was arraigned for the murder of baron Holstein, and was likely to perish for his crime. He had instantly torn himself from the corpse of his Adelina, and hastened to Rouen, to do his duty by Editha, and court justice on himself."

Having made this confession, he desired the notary, who wrote it down for him, to get it printed immediately, and he departed to put his commands in execution; and Altieri, having received all the religious consolation which his priest could bestow, retired to rest more easy in his mind and more satisfied with himself than he had been for years. Still, the idea of perishing on a scaffold, and by an ignominious death, was horrible indeed to him; but a sense of duty and submission to the divine will forbade him to add the crime of suicide to that of murder,

and he virtuously resolved to undergo patiently the punishment that awaited him.

But while the law was preparing its tardy chastisement for this young and in some respects amiable offender, revenge, female revenge, was preparing to anticipate its power. Mrs. St. John, who had always entertained an inveterate hatred towards the baron Holstein's murderer, because she expected he would have made her his wife, and who, supposing him to have been murdered by his servant, had brought about his arrestation by her indefatigable vigilance, no sooner found that Altieri, and not his sister, was the criminal, than she resolved that he should suffer the death which he had deserved; and having heard that Editha might have escaped from prison if she had been willing to do so, she was apprehensive that the friends who had had the means of saving the sister would be

equally eager and more successful in saving the brother. But this she was resolved to prevent;—die he should, if not by the hand of the executioner, she said; and having connected herself with a man of desperate fortunes, and who had been at Rome a hired bravo, she prevailed on him to undertake the murder of Altieri. For this purpose he obtained the dress of a Franciscan; and imitating the voice of Altieri's confessor, whom he had seen enter the prison and return from it, he demanded admittance to Altieri that evening on urgent business; and being left alone with him, he approached the bed where he lay, and before Altieri could suspect his intention, or be aware of the deceit, he stabbed him to the heart, and he expired even without a groan. He then quietly called to the jailor to let him out again, and the murder was not discovered till the next day. Meanwhile he and his abandoned employer escaped into Italy,

where, however, vengeance overtook them, and they themselves were murdered by banditti.

I need not dwell on the distress of Editha and madame Altieri when the fatal news reached them; but the latter owned herself consoled by the thought that her son would now escape the disgrace of dying by the hand of the executioner. Still, however, the blow overwhelmed her so completely that she resolved to forsake the world, and retire into the convent of White Nuns; and Editha, being convinced that a life of devotional exercises was more likely to heal her mother's wounded mind than the occupations of the world, forbore to oppose her design, but on the contrary warmly encouraged it.

For herself, though deeply affected by her brother's miserable fate, she could not help anticipating pleasant though as yet distant prospects; for Dunbar, more passionately devoted to her than ever, had

declared that when she had mourned her brother's fate a twelvemonth in the solitude of the convent, he should again urge his no longer forbidden suit, but come to claim the reward of his unalterable attachment.

The year elapsed; and Dunbar appeared, not as a friend but as a lover, at the grate of the cloister; but he found Editha, though warmly urged by her now affectionate mother to accept sir Malcolm's addresses, averse to enter the world again, and mix in gay scenes, for which sorrow had completely unfitted her.

"But why need we mix in such scenes?" replied Dunbar to her objections as she urged them, "are we not sufficient for our own happiness? There is a spot, dearest Editha, and I call it mine, where all is beauty and all is solitude;—at least the inhabitants around are not the rich who obtrude, but the poor who depend on me; and their visits you will not

I am sure ever deem obtrusive. There you may employ every day in the duties of active benevolence: you may feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and instruct the ignorant; nor need you hear any voice through long successive hours, but that of the dependents who bless you, and of the husband whom you render blest. The world! we will know it not, want it not; for we will be all the world to each other, and the wounded mind of my Editha shall recover its wonted energy by the consciousness that she does not live in vain, but diffuses happiness and comfort around her!"

"Say no more, say no more!" cried Editha, tears, pleasing tears filling her eyes as she spoke; "I will be yours, I will be mistress of this sequestered but happy spot; and perhaps one day or other my mother will join us in it."

In a few weeks Editha became the wife of Dunbar, and all the scenes which

he had fondly pictured were realized by both of them. They were happy; and they deserved to be so: and even madame Altieri herself, having forsaken the convent to become the guest of her daughter, caught at last some of the cheerfulness which she beheld, though there were days which both Editha and her mother devoted to melancholy and solitude, and to the tender yet dreadful recollection of the criminal and penitent Altieri.

"I blame not your sorrow, my love," Dunbar has often remarked at these moments to Editha; "some clouds must at times obscure the brightest earthly prospects, and sorrow is oftimes salutary: but while I see your distress, believe me that I feel an honest pride in knowing that my Editha may live to mourn for the errors of others, but never for her own: and I trust," continued he, putting his little son into her arms, "that our

Altieri (for he was named after his uncle) will have all the merits and none of the vices of his uncle; for he will have a different EDUCATION, and instead of wishing to *reproach*, he will have reason always tenderly to *love* and fervently to BLESS his mother!"

THE ORPHAN,

A TALE

FOUNDED ON A WELL-KNOWN FACT.

"HAVE you had a pleasant walk, my dear?" said Mrs. Hanbury to her husband, as he threw himself into his arm-chair; and, placing his hands on his knees, fixed his eyes pensively on the fire.

"No, I have not," he replied; "for sad thoughts were my companions:—that poor unfortunate orphan! I can't drive her from my mind."

"Nor I neither," answered Mrs. Hanbury: "if she haunted you abroad, she has haunted me at home. Poor Jane!—it is hard, very hard, to be an indigent friendless orphan!"

"Friendless!—who says she is friendless?—We are not dead, Mrs. Hanbury."

"No, my dear; and she shall find that we are not."

"That's right, that's right; but what a thoughtless extravagant fellow was Vernon! He a father, indeed!—he pretend to be fond of his daughter, and yet spend his whole income on himself, instead of saving all he could for his child! However, poor wretch! if he had his senses in his last moments he was sufficiently punished."

"My dear Mr. Hanbury," said Mrs. Hanbury eagerly, "his death was so sudden that I believe—I hope he could not think or feel at all."

"So much the better, so much the better:—but what can this poor dear girl do?"

"Nay, I don't know, Mr. Hanbury; she must go out as a companion, or get

into a school as an assistant, I suppose; or—"

"Go out as a companion!—get into a school!—What, madam, is this all you can do for the only child of your friend Mrs. Vernon?"

"All *I* can do for her!—No, to be sure; but you did not ask me what *I* could do for her. O! if I *might*, *I* could do a great deal."

As she said this she drew her chair close to her husband's, and, leaning on the arm of it, looked up in his face with great meaning.

"Well, now, what would you do if you *might*?"

"Why, I—you know, my dear, we have no children, nor are we likely to have."

"The more 's the pity," replied Mr. Hanbury sighing.

"Not so, my love, if we adopt this

poor orphan; at least she would be some consolation to us for the want of a family; and then we should have the comfort of knowing that we had done a kind action: and if I should ever meet my dear Mrs. Vernon in another world," added she, melting into no unpleasing tears as she spoke, "think with what delight I should say to her, 'My dear friend, I have been a mother to your orphan daughter!'"

Mr. Hanbury did not at first answer her; but he grasped her hand with great affection, and then, in a sort of choked voice, said—

"My dear good woman, we will order the carriage at seven o'clock to-morrow morning, and pay miss Vernon a visit."

The next morning, at the appointed time, they set off; but, as soon as they were on the road, Mr. Hanbury said—

"My dear, there is, I doubt, one ob-

jection to the plan of miss Vernon's living with us."

"Aye; I doubt so," replied Mrs. Hanbury; "for I see one myself."

"Name it."

"Your ward's residing with us also."

"Yes, that is the one I alluded to: yet I do not see why that should be any objection, either: it does not follow that he must fall in love with her, or she with him."

"But suppose he did fall in love with her—what then?"

"Why, you know, she has no fortune; is only a country clergyman's daughter; and, as our estates are all entailed on the male heirs, we can leave her nothing but a bare maintenance."

"Well, but has he not fortune enough for them both?"

"True."

"And were not her birth and education those of a gentlewoman?"

"Very true."

"Then Douglas may thank us for throwing such a treasure in his way, as Jane Vernon must prove to the man whom she marries."

Having thus overcome the only objection to their benevolent scheme, the warm-hearted couple pursued their journey, full of satisfaction from the anticipation of the delight which they flattered themselves they were going to bestow.

Nothing could be better timed than the visit of the Hanburys to miss Vernon. The suddenness of her father's death had almost deprived her of reason; and on the day of the projected visit she had, for the first time, summoned courage to put on her mourning, for the first time ventured to look over her father's papers and accounts, and convince herself that she was left a complete beggar.

She was, for the first time also, left alone since her father's death: two of her

neighbours, well-meaning persons, but little skilled to minister to a mind diseased, had been prevailed upon by her to return home to their families; though it was not without great difficulty that they could be persuaded to believe that solitude would not be unpleasant to her.

Had Jane declared to them that it would be a luxury to be left to commune with her own thoughts, and indulge her grief to the utmost, they would have attributed her words to phrensy, and have insisted on staying with her. But she did not say to them what she was sure they could not understand; and, with many friendly regrets, the two ladies left her.

The first use of their absence which Jane made, was to give an unbridled vent to the tears which her friends had been urgent with her to repress. For now she no longer heard "Do not cry so, my dear; you will make yourself quite ill—It is wicked to repine at the dispensa-

tions of Providence;"—and therefore she felt relieved beyond measure. But from regret for the father, who, with all his extravagance, had treated her with unbounded kindness, she passed to fears for her own future happiness.

Jane Vernon was what is understood by the truly feminine character—embarrassed by notice, and terrified at attracting attention. She had always taken as much pains to conceal her beauty and her talents as most women take to display theirs. Her father only was allowed to hear her sing or play; her father only knew that her pencil-sketches from nature did honour to her taste and execution; but even he was unconscious that she had no inconsiderable power of writing verses.

But now, of these talents, which she had cautiously concealed from every one, she found herself obliged to make a public boast. She saw herself forced to say "I can draw, I can paint, I can sing, I can

talk French, I can embroider," and insist on all her pretensions, with, in her eyes, unbecoming effrontery. And while she was conjuring up this painful prospect to frighten her extreme delicacy, and wound her even morbid sensibility, she had just resolved to hide herself in an obscure lodging, and take in plain-work for her livelihood,—when Mr. and Mrs. Hanbury's carriage stopped at the door, and substituted a present for a future apprehension.

But, as soon as she saw the amiable old couple alight, her fears vanished; she knew that they must be come on an errand of kindness; and when she recollected that Mrs. Hanbury was the dearest friend of that mother whom she lost just as she was old enough to feel her value, her usual diffidence yielded to strong emotion; and as soon as the old lady entered the room, Jane precipitated herself into her arms, as if into the embraces of a parent.

"That's right, that's right, my dear," said the kind old man, wiping his eyes: "cry on, cry on; make no strangers of us, for we come to cry with you:—grief must have its season, and then comes resignation; and then, in due time, come smiles again."

Jane wished to say, that to her, smiles would never return; but she could not speak, and therefore escaped making that rash declaration, so familiar to the lips of all who are experiencing a first sorrow.

At length Jane's feelings became more calm, and she was able to reply to the delicate but anxious inquiries made by the Hanburys into her circumstances and future intentions. As soon as she had given them, on this subject, all the information which they required, and acquainted them with her fixed resolve to submit to any drudgery rather than try for a situation which would force her to boast of her own accomplishments, Mr.

Hanbury made a sign to his wife to open the business on which they came; but Mrs. Hanbury's heart was full with a mixed feeling of pity for the timid girl left to struggle with the world, and of self-satisfaction for the part which she was going to act: therefore she was unable to speak, and returned to her husband's a sign expressive of her wish that he should speak first, and he began with—

"Well, my dear, and so you mean to shut yourself up, and work from morning to night at your needle in order to earn bread for the day!—A pretty resolution, truly! But we are come to tell you, you shall do no such thing; for I am sure you love to oblige, and Mrs. Hanbury and I mean to request you to do us a favour."

Here he hemmed several times, as if choked with a pleasing emotion; and Mrs. Hanbury, giving him through her

tears a smile of approbation, took up the business where he left it off.

"Yes, my dear girl," said she, "Mr. Hanbury tells you truly; we are come to ask a favour of you; we are come to request you to take pity on our childless age, and be to us a daughter and a companion."

Jane gasped for breath at hearing these kind and welcome words; and while she was vainly seeking language to express her feelings, Mr. Hanbury said—

"I assure you, my dear, if you consent to oblige us, you will find enough to do; we shall not let you be idle: my wife there grows too old to look after the family herself, and you must be housekeeper; and when I am ill with the gout you must take the trouble of nursing me, I can tell you that."

Jane had a heart alive to all the finest touches of generosity and delicacy of which the human mind is capable; and

feeling, to the bottom of her soul, the generous intention with which her venerable friends endeavoured to lessen, in her eyes, the degree of obligation which they were going to confer, her weak frame sunk beneath the tide of overwhelming emotions which oppressed her, and heaving a deep sigh she leaned on Mrs. Hanbury's shoulder, and sobbed aloud.

As soon as she recovered her composure, and could tell her kind friends that she accepted their offer, and would cheerfully devote her life to the study of their slightest wishes, they proposed that she should go home with them immediately; and Jane having made the necessary arrangements, and informed her friendly neighbours of the happy change in her prospects, accompanied them, with a grateful and lightened heart, to the place of their residence.

As they went along the Hanburys informed her of their way of life, and told

her they feared that she would find it very dull: but Jane assured them, that she believed no situation could be dull in which the affections were called forth. "And shall not I," she said, "be with my benefactors?"

Still they persisted in expressing their fears on this subject, as the roads round their house were in winter scarcely passable.

"But then, indeed," observed Mr. Hanbury, "in the winter vacation we are always sure of having my ward Mr. Douglas with us; and he enlivens our solitude a little, though not so much as he would do if he were not so very studious; for we never see him till evening."

"Your ward, sir?" replied Jane; "what, Mr. Douglas of Trinity!—is he your ward? and does he stay with you sometimes, sir?"

"Yes, certainly; our house is his

home, I may say:—but what do you know of Mr. Douglas?"

"I!—Nothing, sir; only a friend of mine knows him, and—and—she says, sir, he is a very proud young man."

"Does she?—Ah! she is not the first person who has mistaken coldness and reserve of manner for pride:—but suppose he is proud, what can that signify to you? To you he will not show his pride, I am sure."

"Would *I* were as sure of that!" thought Jane; who, oppressed by the idea of her lowly fortunes, thought that a man of Mr. Douglas's pride and consequence would treat, perhaps with neglect, if not with scorn, the dependent on his guardian's bounty: and while she heard the Hanburys exult in the prospect of seeing their ward very soon, she felt the expectation of his arrival throw a cloud over the pleasure which stole through her whole frame, as she seated herself by the

cheerful wood fire in the wide chimney of Mr. Hanbury's comfortable study, which had been lighted to cheer a chill September evening.

"Well," said Jane to herself, "if he comes, he can only stay two or three months, and Mr. Hanbury says they never see him till evening."

Thus she consoled herself for the expected interruption to her happiness; and then, with a heart full of devout thankfulness, she retired to rest, happy in the consciousness that she was once more sheltered under a paternal roof.

In a few days Jane entered on her domestic duties; and in a short time she forgot her sorrows in the unexpected comforts which she enjoyed, and dreaded rather than wished any change in the family to take place.

"But the visiter, so wished for by the Hanburys, so dreaded by the timid Jane, arrived; and after the most affec-

fionate greetings had taken place between Douglas and them, Jane was introduced to him as "miss Vernon," and to her low curtsey he returned a cold and distant bow. "My friend was right," thought Jane.

Mr. Hanbury then said, "Douglas, this young lady is my ward now as well as yourself." In reply he smiled indeed, but bowed as coldly as before, concluding it was an heiress left to the kind protection which he had experienced himself; and the smile, had she understood it, was one of congratulation on her good fortune.

Soon after the tea-things were brought, and Jane sat down to officiate at the table. But what a difficult task it was! Douglas sat opposite to her, and she found his fine dark eyes fixed on her in a manner that distressed her exceedingly, and confirmed more than ever, her idea that he was proud, and presumed on his superior fortune. But Jane was very very wide of

the truth: the truth was, that Douglas, whose feelings were completely absorbed in an ardent passion for study, and whose warmest ambition was to excel both as a mathematician and a metaphysician, was at this time writing a definition of beauty; and having read in sir Joshua Reynolds's admirable discourses, that he imagined beauty to consist in "the medium form in every thing," he had for some hours been considering within himself how far this definition was true or false: therefore, when he beheld in Jane a face and form of great beauty and regularity, he could not help gazing at her in order to apply to nature the rules and opinions which he was revolving in his mind; and while so engaged he quite forgot that he was probably wounding the modesty of a timid girl of seventeen. But Jane dared not even reprove him with a frown; and he continued his offence, and his ignorance, though the victim of his metaphy-

sical abstractions dropped the sugar-tongs in her confusion, overset the milk-pot, and occasionally scalded her fingers.

At last, tea was over, and Jane took the first opportunity of retiring to her chamber, where she vented her indignation in expressions of "hateful, proud wretch! If I had been his equal, he would not have dared to stare at me in such a manner; but no doubt he heard before he came that his guardian had taken into his house on charity the pennyless orphan of a country curate!" Full of these unpleasant thoughts, she did not choose to go down stairs again till the first bell rang for supper; and then with a swelling heart she returned into the parlour.

As soon as she appeared, Douglas, the formidable Douglas, eagerly rose from his seat, and handed a chair to her, bowing as he did it with an air of great respect, and an expression of kindness and interest on his countenance, which could not be

misunderstood even by the prejudiced eye of Jane. Surprised, pleased, but conscience-stricken, Jane stood quite still, neither accepting nor refusing the offered chair.

"Do sit down, miss Vernon," said Douglas: "you look pale, but perhaps you had rather sit nearer the fire;" and in an instant he had moved the seat nearer it; for Jane was no longer in his eyes a rich independent heiress; he had heard her story, and his generous nature had felt for the poor destitute orphan. Jane listened to him, heard the deep and impressive tone of his voice, felt too that it was modulated, as he addressed her, by the influence of compassion; and recollecting what she had said and thought of him, while she sat sullenly in her own room, she threw herself into the chair and burst into tears.

Douglas was surprised and shocked; but the Hanburys told him that miss Vernon's spirits had been so weak, since her fa-

ther's death, that even the sight of a stranger was too much for them; and then they endeavoured judiciously to direct her thoughts into another channel. Nor was it long before Jane recovered her composure; but it was nearly overset again on Douglas's drawing his chair close to hers, and saying, in a soft and gentle tone of voice, "There is a striking, and in one respect, a happy similarity in our fate, miss Vernon: we have both lost our natural protectors, but have fortunately obtained the love and protection of two kind friends, who are able and willing amply to supply their loss: therefore, dear sister in early sorrow, let me prevail on you not to dwell on the past, but look forward with cheerfulness and hope to the future."

"This man has a heart then," thought Jane; and with feelings very different to those with which she had attended the tea-table, she sat down to supper.

Nor did Douglas repeat his former offence; he had forgotten even his projected essay, in the pity which the Hanburys had excited in his breast for the poor orphan, now become an object of such sacred respect in his eyes, that he was afraid of not being attentive enough in his manner to her; and never had Douglas been known to pay such attention to any woman, as he did this evening to the poor orphan Jane.

"So this is the man whose arrival I dreaded," said Jane to herself as soon as she reached her chamber. "I never will allow myself to be prejudiced against any one again, nor to form a hasty judgment."

Then determining to make Douglas ample amends by her good opinion of him in future, for the injustice which she had done him, she lay awake some hours, her spirits being too much elevated to allow her to sleep, as she felt that delight-

ful sensation to the heart of the poor dependent victim of ill-fortune, the consciousness of being to the prosperous the object of attention and respect.

The next morning Jane experienced a slight disappointment at finding herself obliged to begin breakfast without Douglas; but Mr. and Mrs. Hanbury assured her that they never waited for the young philosopher, and Jane was forced to proceed even to her second cup before Douglas appeared. Jane blushed when, after having apologized for not being down sooner, he turned to her with an air of coldness, and inquired after her health; but as soon as he had performed this necessary act of politeness, and exchanged a few common-place observations on the weather and politics, Douglas fell into a profound reverie, from which he did not seem to awake till the breakfast things being removed, he bowed without speak-

ing to any one present, and retired to his own room again.

But though Jane was vexed at Douglas's absence and inattention, she was not angry, for she did not attribute his coldness and neglect to pride, but to learned abstraction; and in this idea she was confirmed by hearing Mrs. Hanbury say, "Ah! he is gone; and I know by his manner that we shall see him no more till dinner-time, as he is study-mad, as usual."

"But at dinner-time we *shall* see him," thought Jane; and while she busied herself in making preparations for the dinner, and in other household occupations, she could not help thinking how much the arrival of a visiter enlivened a family, and added interest to the dull routine of domestic duties.

At dinner, and not till then, Douglas reappeared, but cold, reserved, and taci-

turn. The interest which the forlorn condition of the poor orphan had excited in him, was swallowed up in mathematical perplexities; and having eaten his meal almost in silence, he again retired to his studies, leaving Jane quite as silent as himself.

At tea-time he came again, and behaved in the same manner: but at length arrived his accustomed season of relaxation; and an hour before supper, satisfied with his long application, and in consequence of it with himself, he joined the party round the wood fire, with all that grace and amenity of manners which had filled Jane with such remorseful and pleasant feelings the preceding evening, and with a degree of vivacity and animation which she did not imagine him to possess.

After supper Douglas proposed to Mrs. Hanbury a renewal of their old habits; to which she cheerfully consented; and in a moment Mr. Hanbury was seated at a lit-

tle table, on one side of the fire, with his pipe and wine and water by him. Douglas had placed Mrs. Hanbury's work-table on the other side of it; and she and Jane having resumed their work, Douglas took up a play-book, and began reading The Rivals aloud. Douglas read admirably; and Jane, to whom the play was entirely new, almost forgot her usual timidity, and laughed aloud at the humour of Acres, Sir Anthony, and Mrs. Malaprop, while she wept in uncontrollable sympathy for the wrongs, and delicate tenderness, of the truly affectionate Julia; and midnight came unnoticed, unfelt by them all.

"And is it indeed time to go to rest!" thought Jane. "Surely this has been the most delightful evening that I ever passed. Who could ever have made me believe that I should laugh so heartily again?"

The next morning philosophy and mathematics as usual, like the Alps crowned with snows, sat on the brow of the Cam-

bridge student, and Jane hardly knew him again.

"But evening will come at last," she said to herself: and it did come, and Douglas read another comedy; and again the amusement which he afforded in the evening made ample amends for the gloomy abstraction of the day.

In this manner, with very little interruption, continued to pass the days and evenings while Douglas remained at the Lodge, as Mr. Hanbury's seat was called; and Jane's letters to her friends in her native village, though they did not express absolutely how happy she was, breathed nothing but happiness; one of them was as follows:

"You say, my dear friend, that you should think, but for the style of my letters, that I must pass my time very heavily at the Lodge, shut up, as you phrase it, with two old people, and a young man who is notoriously proud, and never talks. But I assure you, you are quite

mistaken; and I sometimes think that it is very wicked in me to be so happy as I am. It seems as if I had forgotten my poor father; but indeed I have not; I often think, fine reader as he was himself, how he would have enjoyed hearing Mr. Douglas read.—It is very strange how one's opinions alter!—I used to be so fond of an autumnal morning; and love to walk out, and try to paint the varied and warm tints of the falling leaves; but now, it is quite otherwise, I long for evening, and its cheerful fireside; my mornings are entirely filled up with attention to domestic concerns, and even, would you believe it, to cookery and making pastry! Mrs. Hanbury likes that I should make myself useful, and you can't think what pleasure I take in it.

"To do Mr. Douglas justice, he is not at all difficult to please, though he has been used to College living; but I have found out his favourite dishes, and I take

care that he shall have them—I am sure he deserves this attention from me, by reading to us while we work. Once he obligingly declared that the sweets were the best he had ever tasted; and I could not help blushing, for I thought Mrs. Hanbury was going to tell him that I made them: but she did not, and I was so glad that she did not! at least it certainly was as well that she did not.

"After dinner both Mr. and Mrs. Hanbury go to sleep in their arm-chair, and I sit meditating, looking at the fire, and anticipating the comforts of the tea-table and the closed curtains; while sometimes, but very rarely, Mr. Douglas comes down, and sits meditating too: but an hour before supper, he always comes down, and after supper he reads till bed-time.—Oh, my dear friend! blest be the hour when my kind protectors sought me in my misery, and gave me a home with them!"

In this manner did Jane continue to write during the time of Mr. Douglas's stay at the Lodge. But at length term time arrived, and the once eagerly anticipated evening hour became as joyless to her, as the lately neglected autumnal morning; and her letters to her friends were so unfrequent, and so full, when she did write, of indications of weariness, and melancholy, that her correspondents took the alarm, and earnestly begged to know whether the discontent now so visible in her letters, proceeded from a change in the conduct of the Hanburys to her.

Jane, distressed and astonished, answered this letter by return of post, and expressed her wonder that any thing in her letters should have occasioned suspicions so false and injurious, for that "she was sure she never was happier, at least she was very sure that she was very happy."

When the Christmas vacation came,

which Douglas usually passed in London, his guardian was surprised to receive a letter from him, saying that he should pass the whole of it at the Lodge.

"So, so, my dear," said Mr. Hanbury, nodding very significantly at his wife, "Douglas never did this before; do you not think he finds our house more attractive now, than it used to be?—You understand me!"

"I *do*, Mr. Hanbury," replied Mrs. Hanbury gravely, "but I am by no means sure that your suspicions are just; and I earnestly conjure you not to drop a hint of such an idea, even in joke, to miss Vernon: she has great sensibility and great delicacy: the former might lead her to repay the supposed gift of Douglas's heart with the real gift of hers; and the latter would make her unable to support his presence, without a downcast eye, a blushing cheek, and a consciousness cruelly distressing."

"Well,—and what then? She would only look the prettier;—I must have my joke, wife, I must indeed!"

"Not at the probable expense of a young girl's peace.—Believe me, my dear, that I would as soon plant a dagger in the heart of a young woman, as endeavour to persuade her that an amiable man beheld her with partiality, unless there was no possible doubt of his intentions towards her, as I know that women commonly love because they are beloved, and gratitude in a well-disposed mind is the foundation of passion. So promise me, my dear husband, that you will not, for the sake of a little pleasantry, run the risk of exciting in Jane's feeling mind an idea, which she may learn to dwell upon with too much delight."

"Do you think, then, she is already disposed to like our ward?"

"Is it possible that any one can know him, and not be disposed to like

him? At present, I am sure that Jane's regard for him does not exceed the bounds of esteem; but if she thought that his for her was of the nature of love, who knows how soon her pure heart might reflect the feeling which she was told she might attribute to his?"

"Well—well, my dear, what you say is very reasonable, and I will behave as well as I can."

And he did behave well; for, when he told Jane that Douglas was coming, he did so without a comment, or even a significant smile: the smile, indeed, Jane would not have seen; for surprise, joy, and a feeling as yet undefined even to herself, covered her cheek with blushes, and fixed her eyes on the ground; while, making some excuse to leave the room, she bounded like an antelope through the hall and up the staircase, and, rushing into her own apartment, stood panting there with breathless yet pleasurable emotion.

"He is coming, and we shall have no more long evenings," said Jane to herself; and unconsciously, perhaps, she recollected that she had heard it was not usual for him to visit the Lodge at Christmas. The next day and the succeeding one did not appear very tedious to Jane, because she was employed in making preparations for Douglas's arrival; and on the third day he actually arrived.

But though Jane had been clandestinely watching for his arrival at the hall window, no sooner did she see him approaching than she fled into her own apartment, too much fluttered to stay and receive him; nor did she venture down stairs till Mrs. Hanbury came up to chide her for not being in the way to welcome Mr. Douglas.

After the first emotions of pleasure, on seeing his friends again, had subsided, and the usual questions and greetings were ended, Douglas's manner became more cold, and his countenance expressed even

greater absence of mind than ever; and it was evident that study was even more than usual the idol of his soul; while the supper hour, and the hours succeeding it, instead of being, as formerly, enlivened by Douglas's own pleasantry, or his taking the trouble of reading the pleasantries of others, were passed by him in alternate fits of reverie, and cold efforts to talk; and by the rest, in that sort of languid disappointed silence, which is often caused by the marked taciturnity and abstraction of one person in a small circle.

Bed-time at last arrived; and Jane, who sat leaning her head on her hands some time before she undressed herself, thought how excessively tired with his journey Mr. Douglas must be, and hoped, with a sigh, that he would be better the next day.

But morning brought no change with it in the conduct of Douglas; and Mr. Hanbury seeing by his manner to Jane that it was not on her account that he

derived from gazing by stealth on his fine countenance, and listening to the impressive tones of his voice, was merely a tribute which duty exacted from her as due to superior virtue and superior abilities.

But, contented as Jane had learnt to be with the mere presence of Douglas, she was as much charmed as ever when he allowed himself to relax from his application, become the cheerful companion, and read out to them as he had formerly done, and the evening hours fled again with the rapidity of lightning. But the time of Douglas's departure arrived, and Jane's letters to her friends resumed their gloomy character; nor did they impress on her correspondents the reality of the happiness which she endeavoured to assure them of, till the long vacation approached, and Douglas had announced his decided intention of spending it at the Lodge.

He came,—but not as usual to seclude

himself all day in his study: he had injured his health by his unremitting application, and his physician had said to him:

"There is, I dare say, no doubt of your being senior wrangler, provided you do not kill yourself by study before the time comes: therefore, I desire you to go into the country, and, instead of studying all day, take exercise, and endeavour to be as idle as your neighbours."

Douglas obeyed, though reluctantly; at least he studied only a few hours in the early part of the morning when he reached the Lodge, and passed the rest of his time in driving Mrs. Hanbury and Jane in a little low whiskey about the country, or in rowing them in a boat on a piece of water in the grounds; and the evening was no longer the only season of Jane's enjoyment, but Douglas was with her always, except when he was studying, and she engaged in domestic arrangements; and when she retired to rest at night, she

could not sleep till she had recollected all his words and looks during the day, and had assured herself that she might consider him as her friend and well-wisher. Nor, as her tender apprehensions had been considerably awakened by the severity of the cough which tormented Douglas, could she forbear sitting up in her bed, as his chamber was immediately over hers, in order to listen whether its violence was abated; and not till she heard him cough no longer, but fancied him fallen asleep, could she seek repose herself; and as she did so, she used to exclaim with a sigh, "Thank God! he is certainly better than he was."

But November came, and Douglas perfectly restored to health returned to college; while the only thought that had power to call a smile to the pale lip of Jane was, that he would certainly return to the Lodge at the ensuing vacation.

Christmas came, however, but not

Douglas; Easter arrived, and still he had not announced his intentions of coming to the Lodge; and while Mr. and Mrs. Hanbury had begun to wonder at neither hearing from him nor seeing him, he sent a letter to inform them that he was too deeply immersed in study to be able to spare from it even the time which he must be on the road; and Jane, complaining of a violent head-ach, went to bed that day immediately after tea. But Jane's complaint continued for several successive days. Still, however, she persisted in reading out in an evening, and in reading the very plays which Douglas read when she first knew him; while Mr. and Mrs. Hanbury were surprised at her powers of imitation, for they assured her that she read them exactly like Douglas. Jane's head-ach, and other complaints, however, vanished as June approached, and Douglas's promised visit was openly

anticipated with eager expectation by his old friends, and secretly by Jane.

At length the very day for his coming was fixed, and the young housekeeper busied herself in contrivances to add to his comfort and his pleasure; when, the day before he was expected, Mr. Hanbury received a letter from him, saying that he found it necessary to stay at college during the whole vacation, as he wanted to consult books there, which he could get no where else; nor could he be sure of coming to them even at Easter. This letter, which he read aloud to his wife, gave pain to the affectionate hearts of the old people; and they would have indulged in many expressions of regret at not seeing the youth so justly dear to them, had not their attention been called off by a scream from the servant, who was in an adjoining room (the door of which was open) assisting miss Vernon to preserve

some sweetmeats: the affrighted couple immediately ran into the room, and found Jane fallen on the floor in a fainting fit. She was instantly conveyed to bed, and at length they succeeded in restoring her to life; but such was her languor and weakness that she declared her inability to rise again, and for two days she kept her bed, while Mr. Hanbury sent a message to beg she would make haste to get well again, as he could not exist without her and Douglas too: "And I am sorry to tell you, my dear Jane," said Mrs. Hanbury, as she delivered this message, "that Douglas does not come to us at all this year."

"Indeed!" said Jane; and hiding her face in the pillow, she seemed to prepare herself for sleep, that she might avoid the necessity of feigning the surprise which she did not feel, as she had overheard the letter, and had fainted in consequence of it.

When Jane made her appearance

again below stairs, Mr. Hanbury told her she might just as well have staid above, for any pleasure that he was likely to derive from her presence: "For indeed," added he, "my poor child, you are so altered, and look so ill, that it almost breaks my heart to look at you."

"Indeed, if you go on *thus*, Jane, I must have a physician sent for," said Mrs. Hanbury, taking her burning hand; but Jane changing colour, declared that she was quite well again, and would not consent to have any advice. But in vain did her tongue contradict her feelings. Her heart preyed on her delicate frame, and she was convinced too late of its real situation. The pangs which the alteration of Douglas's intention of coming to the Lodge inflicted on her, opened her eyes to her own passion for him, and at the same time convinced her that he felt nothing for her but the calm regard of friendship and esteem; for, if he had, could he have given up his

visit? Not that she allowed herself to indulge in the presumptuous hope, as she called it, of ever being his,—but such a hope, unconsciously to herself, had crept into her soul: and now, execrating her own daring folly and indelicate weakness, she hated, she despised herself, without being able at the same time to cease to love Douglas.

A few weeks of this internal tumult and agony, which with the fortitude of the Spartan boy she concealed from every observer, at length proved too much even for her resolution to contend with, and she was compelled at last to own that she was ill, very ill,—while Mrs. Hanbury was desired by the medical attendants to lose no time in conveying her to Bristol. There she remained without any symptom of amendment till the month of October, when Mr. Hanbury wrote word to his wife that Douglas was coming to spend three weeks at the Lodge, con-

trary to his original intention; and he bitterly lamented, that as Jane was not at all better, Mrs. Hanbury would not be able to hasten home to receive him.

This letter Mrs. Hanbury read to Jane, who made no comments on it; but the next morning, when Mrs. Hanbury entered her room, she found her to her great astonishment up and dressed, and looking considerably improved in health; nay, she continued mending so rapidly during the following week, that she declared herself able to return to the Lodge; nor could Mrs. Hanbury hesitate one moment to believe her. Accordingly they set off on their return, and arrived at home the day after Douglas.

The delighted Mr. Hanbury and his ward hastened to the door to welcome them; but Douglas started back shocked and affrighted when he beheld the alteration in miss Vernon's appearance: and when he pressed forward to assist her out

of the carriage, and found she was so weak that he must take her out in his arms, he could not resist the impulse of affectionate pity as her head involuntarily sunk on his shoulder; but pressing her to his heart, he said, "My dear girl, little was I aware how very ill you had been!"

The action and the words had only too powerful an effect on the unhappy and conscious sufferer, who, fixing on him a look which any one but himself must have understood, sighed deeply, and fainted on his bosom. But her fainting was attributed to the fatigue of the journey; and Jane, on her recovery, saw no reason to apprehend, from the countenances of those around her, that her fatal secret was discovered.

The next morning she was able to come down stairs before dinner, and during Douglas's stay she continued to do so, and even to sit up nearly as late as usual; while Douglas, aware that by reading he

non, how are you?' and 'I hope you are better than you were;' while his looks tell me how much he thinks me altered!" She then looked in the glass. "Altered! indeed I am! He once thought me handsome, I have been told, but (and she smiled mournfully as she spoke) there is not a trace of beauty left now: still, that would not signify; for, if he knew *why* I was so changed, he would, if he had ever loved me, love me the better for the alteration; and at any rate he would *pity* me. Pity me! pity me! pity the poor lovesick girl! Horrible! No—never, never may I live to see myself an object of *such pity* to him! No—I can *die*, and die contented, so I believe myself still an object of his esteem and respect; and when he comes, I will behave with such resolution!"

But Douglas did not come, and Jane grew daily worse; nor did he talk of coming in the ensuing vacation, and Jane

was again ordered to Bristol; but she declared herself too weak to undertake the journey, and the physician himself owned that he believed it would be unavailing.

A few days after he had said this, and had witnessed the extreme grief which this declaration had occasioned the kind protectors of the unhappy orphan, he begged them to attend him into another room, as he had something of great importance to say to them. They obeyed, and he told them he was perfectly convinced that miss Vernon's disorder was caused by mental uneasiness. "She has something on her mind," said he; "and unless you can prevail on her to disclose what it is, believe me, it is not in the power of medicine to save her."

Mr. and Mrs. Hanbury's astonishment equalled their distress, and the physician proceeded to suggest the probability of her pining in secret and unrequited love.

"Impossible!" cried Mr. Hanbury eagerly, "impossible!"

"Would I thought so too!" mournfully replied Mrs. Hanbury, whose long blindness was now painfully removed.

Mrs. Hanbury had very rigid ideas on the subject of female delicacy, and was not therefore able to bear for a moment the idea that any woman whom she esteemed could be guilty of such a violation of it as to entertain a passion for a man who had never by word, look, or action endeavoured to inspire her with it: but she now recollected a thousand instances of Jane's attachment to Douglas which had hitherto escaped her; and while she thought how cruelly her intended kindness to the orphan of her dearest friend had been perverted by circumstances, she gave way to an agony of grief, and was some time before she could listen to the voice of consolation.

"Compose yourself, my dear dear

woman," cried Mr. Hanbury: "you know what we did was meant for the best, and God and Mrs. Vernon could require no more of us. Indeed the doctor must be mistaken. You know she has seen no young man often but Douglas."

"*But* Douglas!" echoed Mrs. Hanbury; "is not he only too likely to be the object of her affections?"

"He is *not*, however; for I have long thought, and I now lately have been *convinced*, that she dislikes him."

"Dislikes him!"

"Yes:—In the first place you know she was much prejudiced against him before she saw him, and I see clearly, by the distance of her manner to him for some time past, that her old prejudices are returned. Then you see that I have never been able to prevail on her to sing to him, or show her drawings to him, though I have sometimes conquered her timidity

on other occasions: but she always refuses to oblige him this way; and I assure you, that when I told her last Christmas that he was coming to see us, she burst into tears, and looked I don't know how."

"Say no more, say no more, Mr. Hanbury," cried his more quick-sighted wife, "it is then, I see, too true!"

"Nay, madam, if you require any further proof," said the physician, "read these verses, which, as she lay in a restless sleep just now, dropped from her pillow. They are torn through, you see, and she was probably going to destroy them entirely, when some one came in and interrupted her. Read them, and let me replace them before she awakes from the sleep into which she is again fallen."

Mrs. Hanbury read them hastily, and mournfully exclaimed, "I fear these lines are only too prophetic; and she will, she must die! for I know she will never own

the truth, and such a load of unshared anguish must sink her to the grave."

In vain did Mr. Hanbury declare he did not believe that love and Douglas were the only causes of Jane's disorder; his wife and the physician were both against him; and it was at length resolved upon that the latter should inform miss Vernon that he knew the cause of her complaint was seated in the heart, and that if she wished to give herself a chance of living, she must unburthen her mind to her kind and affectionate friends. He did so, and Jane heard him with a degree of fierce indignation wholly foreign to her character; for her extreme delicacy was wounded by his suspicions, and roused her to the most violent resentment. But the feeling was too strong, and too uncongenial to her nature, to last, and she sunk almost fainting on her pillow; and then her kind adviser attacked her feelings in

another way. He represented to her the affection, even parental, which the Hanburys entertained for her; and told her, that however desirous she might be of dying, her life was no longer at her disposal, as it was due to the friends who had adopted her, and that she ought to struggle with her feelings, and endeavour to take every means of recovery for their sakes, if not for her own. This was attacking the grateful affectionate heart of Jane on the right side; and after a long and dreadful struggle between delicacy and duty, Jane owned that the physician's suspicions were well founded, and promised solemnly to confide in her venerable friends.

At length, after many struggles, many fruitless efforts, and many expressions of the horror and contempt excited in her by her own weakness, the poor self-condemned sufferer confessed to her afflicted friends, that she had imbibed a deep-

rooted and hopeless passion for their unconscious ward; and she made this avowal of a pure and virtuous attachment to one of the most amiable of men, with more reluctance, timidity, and self-condemnation, than is felt by some women who have to own that the violence of passion has led them to the commission of error; nor did she do so till she had obtained from them both the strongest assurances that they would keep her secret with all possible fidelity.

Mr. Hanbury was surprised and afflicted too, nay perhaps mortified at his want of discernment; but sorrow was the only feeling experienced by his wife; and after having spoken the kindest words of consolation to the wretched girl, she took the first opportunity of leaving her, that she might consult with her husband on what was best to be done.

While they were consulting together, Douglas, who was not to be of age till

three-and-twenty, but was now within six weeks of his majority, wrote a few hasty lines to announce his intention of coming to them the next day for a week; and the distressed couple, convinced that they ought not to sacrifice Jane's life to their promise, or her delicacy, took their resolution accordingly.

Douglas came in high spirits; but they were greatly damped on hearing the sad situation of the interesting orphan, for whom he felt a sort of brother's love.

But his feelings then were blissful to what he experienced, when, after many tears from Mrs. Hanbury, and many signs of strong emotion in his guardian, as they drew round the evening fire, Mrs. Hanbury simply and shortly related the cause of Jane's malady; while in proportion as he dwelt on the length, truth, and ardour of Jane's affection, Mrs. Hanbury as fully expatiated on her extreme delicacy; on the difficulty which they had to

get the secret from her; and on the eagerness with which she extorted a promise from them never to reveal it.

When they had done this, they ceased speaking, and did not make a single comment. Douglas listened to the tale motionless as a statue, and incapable of speaking a word, while his friends sat equally silent by his side; till Mr. Hanbury, sliding a copy of the poor orphan's torn verses into his hand, explained what they were, how they had obtained them, and told him to read them when he was alone.

Immediately after Douglas started up to retire to his own room; but when he reached the door he turned round, and said, "Allow me this night for reflection."

He had need of, it indeed.—Humanity, pity, and gratitude, called upon him imperiously to offer the unhappy Jane his hand, and save her from the misery of

dying of unrequited love. But then the sacrifice was a tremendous one. He felt for Jane, though she was beautiful, amiable, and intelligent, no sentiment resembling passion, and marriage itself was at that time inconvenient, nay, even hateful to him; as it would interfere with all those plans so long the darling objects of his wishes, plans calculated to repay him for the severity of his past studies, by opening to him new fields of improvement and delight.

It had for years been his intention to travel over Greece, and, indeed, over every part of Europe, and great part of Asia, as soon as he had taken his long-expected degree, and had possession of his fortune; and he well knew that it was impossible for him to take a wife with him in some of the expeditions which he was most fond of projecting. But then he recollected, that if he did marry Jane, pleasure was all *he* gave up, and if he did not, he sacrificed *her life*.

At this moment the verses given him by Mr. Hanbury met his eye, and he read as follows:

Not one kind look—one friendly word!
Wilt thou in chilling silence sit;
Nor through the social hour afford
One cheering smile, or beam of wit?

Yet still, absorb'd in studious care,
Neglect to waste one look on me;
For then my happy eyes may dare
To gaze and dwell uncheck'd on thee.

And still in silence sit, nor deign
One gentle precious word to say;
For silent I may then remain,
Nor let my voice my soul betray.

This falt'ring voice, these conscious eyes,
My throbbing heart too plainly speak:
There timid hopeless passion lies,
And bids it *silence* keep, and *break*.

"Dear exquisite girl!" cried Douglas when he had perused these lines:—"No! thy heart shall *not* break."

So saying, he read some more lines:—

To me how dear this twilight hour,
Cheer'd by the faggot's varying blaze!
If this be mine, I ask no more
On morn's refulgent light to gaze:

For now, while on HIS glowing cheek
I see the fire's red radiance fall,
The darkest seat I softly seek,
And gaze on HIM, unseen by all.

His folded arms, his studious brow,
His thoughtful eye, unmark'd, I see;
Nor could his voice or words bestow
So dear, so true a joy on me.

But he forgets that I am near—
Fame, future fame, in thought he seeks.
To him ambition's paths appear,
And bright the sun of science breaks.

His heart with ardent hope is fill'd;
His prospects full of beauty bloom:
But, oh! *my* heart despair has chill'd,
My only prospect is—the tomb!

One only boon from Heaven I claim,
And may it grant the fond desire!
That I may live to hear his fame,
And in that throb of joy *expire.*

"No—that thou shalt not," said Douglas, bursting into tears; "thou shalt live to share and to enjoy it. How blind, how fatally blind have I been!"

The next lines that attracted his notice were these:

Oft hast thou mark'd my chilling eye,
And mourn'd my cold reserve to see,
Resolv'd the fickle friend to fly,
Who seem'd unjust to worth and thee:

While I, o'erjoy'd, thy anger saw—
Blest proof I had not tried in vain
To give imperious passion law,
And hide my bosom's conscious pain.

But when night's shelt'ring darkness came,
And none the conscious wretch could view,
How fiercely burn'd the smother'd flame!
How deep was ev'ry sigh I drew!

Yet still to thee I 'll clothe my brow
In all that jealous pride requires;
My look the type of Ætna's snow—
My heart, of Ætna's secret fires.

"I will read no more," said Douglas, pacing the room:—"Oh! what a monster I was to be blind and insensible to so true and delicate an attachment! And yet, what a coxcomb must I have been, had I thought myself capable of inspiring such a passion as this!"

At this moment another song dropped on the floor; and, contrary to his resolution, he could not forbear reading that as well as the others.

One little moment, short as blest,
Compassion Love's soft semblance wore,
My meagre form he fondly press'd,
And on his beating bosom bore.

His frame with strong emotion shook,
And kindness tun'd each falt'ring word;
While I, surpris'd, with anxious look
The meaning of his glance explor'd.

But soon my too experienc'd heart
Read nought but generous pity there;
I felt presumptuous hope depart,
And all again was dark despair.

Yet still, in memory still, my heart
Lives o'er that fleeting bliss again;
I feel his glance, his touch, impart
Emotion through each bursting vein.

And "*Once* (I cry) those eyes so sweet
"On me with fondness deign'd to shine;
"For once I felt his bosom beat
"Against the conscious throbs of mine!"

Nor shall the dear remembrance die
While aught of life to me is given;
But sooth my last convulsive sigh,
And be, till then, my joy—my heaven!

"She shall not die, by Heaven she shall not!" exclaimed Douglas, again bursting into tears:—"She shall live—she must live—if it be in the power of love, gratitude, and admiration, to save her!—O would it were morning! I could find in my heart to call up the family, and entreat to be admitted immediately into her presence."

With these feelings, satisfied with himself, and full of tenderness towards Jane,

Douglas fell asleep; but his rest was disturbed, and towards morning he awoke with a sort of oppressive and painful consciousness on his mind, the cause of which he could not at first recollect; but, by degrees, the truth burst upon him, and he recollected the sacred, but still reluctant, duty which he was called upon to perform.

"But surely I can offer her my hand (thought he), engage myself to her, and then travel for three years before I marry?"

But he recollected that if he did so, he should inevitably prove to miss Vernon, that pity and not love occasioned his offer; and seeing that her secret was betrayed, she would die with shame and consternation.

"No," said Douglas to himself after a long struggle, "the sacrifice must be complete, or not made at all;—nor will I call it a sacrifice. That man is a contemptible being who lives for himself

alone, and I have it in my power not only to save the life of one of the most amiable of human beings, but bid her live for happiness dear as unexpected.—No: mine she shall be; and I doubt not but that in a short time my love will fully equal hers."

Then, having laid his plan so as to prevent all possibility of Jane's suspecting that his pity and not his passion spoke, he wrote a letter to her requesting an interview; and having given it to the servant, with slow and pensive step he entered the breakfast-room.

"Well, my dear boy," said Mr. Hanbury, holding out his hand to him, and he could not utter another word; while Mrs. Hanbury fixed her eyes on his face, as if to read his very soul.

"I have written a note," replied Douglas, "to request an interview with miss Vernon."

"Then," cried Mrs. Hanbury, "she

will suspect that we have betrayed her to you."

"On the contrary," replied Douglas, "I wrote purposely to prevent this suspicion, and I am sure that she cannot suspect it."

Still Mrs. Hanbury continued to be alarmed; and when informed that miss Vernon was awake, she hastened to her, to learn how the letter affected her. She found her in great agitation, but it was of pleasure only.

"See, my dear madam," said she, holding out the letter; "see!—a letter from Mr. Douglas!—So, he is here!—and I shall see him once more!—and he says;—but read what he says yourself:—it has made me so happy!" And then she wiped from her forehead the chill damps emotion had gathered there.

The letter was as follows:—

"MY DEAR MISS VERNON,

"I am here, arrived only for a few

days, and with inexpressible grief I find myself forbidden to see you. Our good friends tell me you are too ill to bear the sight of a stranger, as they spitefully call me; but as we may not meet again for some time, I cannot bear to depart without bidding you farewell, and judging for myself of the real state of your health. You know I pique myself on being somewhat of a physician; but this is not all. I have something to consult with you upon, which is of importance to my future happiness; and you know, in some cases, the young had rather ask advice of the young than of the old. Do therefore see me, if it be but for a few minutes; and if you will be so kind, I will defy the frowns of our too careful guardian.

"Yours most affectionately,

"GEORGE DOUGLAS."

Mrs. Hanbury turned away to hide the starting tears which this proof of Douglas's watchful delicacy forced from her eyes; while the deceived and happy Jane

exclaimed, "Only think! he wants to consult me, to ask my advice! and I shall not only see him again before I die, but I shall have perhaps the consolation in my last moments to reflect that I may be of use to him, and that through life he may feel the benefit of my regard; for you know," added she, "though I am so much his inferior in sense as well as in every thing else, my wish to serve him may inspire me with the means."

"Don't talk so, Jane; I can't bear it;" said Mrs. Hanbury: "you are not dying, and you shall not die; I can't part with you."

Jane smiled mournfully as Mrs. Hanbury said this, and then asked her why they would not let Douglas see her.

"Because we feared that the sight of him might overpower you, and betray the secret which you so much wish to keep."

"No, my dear madam, no," said Jane with a self-approving smile; "think me not so weak. Terror lest he should suspect

my secret, has given, and will give me courage to face and overcome the danger: besides, it is only one struggle, one effort more; and shall I let my strength fail me in sight of land!"

"You are a noble girl, Jane," replied Mrs. Hanbury, "and in spite of your despondency I trust you will yet be spared for happiness."

Jane said nothing, but prepared to dress herself; but not being able to endure the indecorum of receiving Mr. Douglas where she was, she was at last with some difficulty seated in an easy chair in the next room supported by pillows; and having desired Mrs. Hanbury to tell Mr. Douglas that she was ready to receive him, with a beating heart and varying colour she sat awaiting his approach. But the moment of Douglas's appearance was the last of Jane's weakness; delicacy and virtuous pride had power to overcome even imperious love; and while her heart throbbed almost to

bursting, Jane's manner, dignified and composed, though gentle and affectionate, excited at once surprise, tenderness and admiration in Douglas; and as he approached her, unable to overcome, and wishing to conceal his emotion, he turned to the window, having grasped and then relinquished the cold clammy hand which hung almost powerless by her side.

"You find me greatly altered," observed Jane with surprising firmness; and Douglas in silence seated himself next to her. He then questioned her on the state of her symptoms; felt her pulse; and having at length composed his own spirits a little, and amused Jane, he assumed a smiling air, and told Mrs. Hanbury he wished to be left alone with miss Vernon, as he had some important business to settle with her. Mrs. Hanbury affected to joke in return, and then left the room, almost unable to support herself.

"My dear miss Vernon," cried Douglas turning very pale, "I have been guilty of a sort of subterfuge in order to obtain this interview. I knew that the fears of my kind friends would forbid it, especially if they suspected my reasons for asking it; and I could not bear any longer the suspense which now oppresses me." Here he paused, and Jane gazed on his evident emotion with feelings which I cannot pretend to analyse or describe. At length, taking her passive hand, and almost weeping over her faded form as it reclined on the pillow which trembled under her, he proceeded thus: "You know not, my dear girl, how much I am interested in your speedy recovery. In a few, a very few weeks I shall be of age, and my own master; and then, if you are able and willing to listen to me, dearest Jane, it is, it is my fixed intention to offer you my heart and hand."

On hearing these words, these welcome, precious, and unexpected words, the

keenly-feeling girl sprung up from her chair in a transport of joy and tenderness, and instantly fell lifeless at his feet!

In vain was every possible remedy applied to restore her to life, in vain did her terrified friends hang over her in mute and breathless agony. It was soon ascertained that the too susceptible girl was indeed gone for ever!

I shall leave my readers to imagine the anguish of Douglas and the affectionate protectors of the ill-fated orphan, when the melancholy truth was at last reluctantly admitted by them; but I cannot dismiss my subject without holding up this melancholy incident, as one of the many striking and warning examples so frequently exhibited, of the danger accruing to the young and unwary of my sex from the thoughtless indulgence of a preference for any man, however amiable he may be, unless assured beyond the power of doubt that such a preference is mutual. The extreme amiableness of the object is

no excuse for giving way to a passion which may doom the sufferer who nourishes it to pine in sorrow or in sickness, converting her into a useless, joyless member of society; an object of pity bordering on contempt to her acquaintance, and of painful anxiety to her relations and friends.

If a sword deprives us of the use of our limbs, it is no satisfaction to us that the sword was a golden one; and whether the man for whom a young woman sighs in hopeless love be vicious or amiable, is of no further importance than as it serves to show whether her taste be depraved or otherwise.

Nor should those to whom is delegated the task of watching over the conduct and propensities of young women, allow themselves to imagine that they may on the subject of love sport with the hopes and vanity of an inexperienced girl. If such an one be in the habit of hearing from the weak women or flattering men who sur-

round her, persons more desirous of saying a pleasant than a true thing, that she appears the object of decided preference to an amiable man, she learns to view him with more than common complacency; and should distressing consequences ensue from their imprudence, the persons so talking would vainly endeavour to excuse themselves by declaring that they did not think so prudent, so delicate, so sensible a girl was likely to be injured by the hints which they had given. Let them remember, that true love, like the Cretan monster of old, is fond of preying on the CHOICEST VICTIMS; and that the PUREST streams reflect images more DEEPLY and more PERFECTLY than OTHERS.

THE END.

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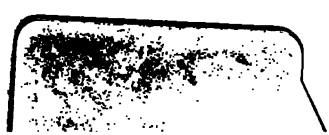
ERRATA.

Vol. I. page 157, line 12, for *five* read *several*.
164, line 4, for *two* read *four*.
241, line 11, for *instance* read *instant*.
281, line 5, for *manful* read *mournful*.
293, for *reasons* read *reason*.

Vol. II. page 13, line 2, for *reclusion* read *seclusion*, and for *temporary* read *complete*.

Vol. III. page 40, line 13, for *one* read *me*.
105, line 2, for *kindness* read *fondness*.